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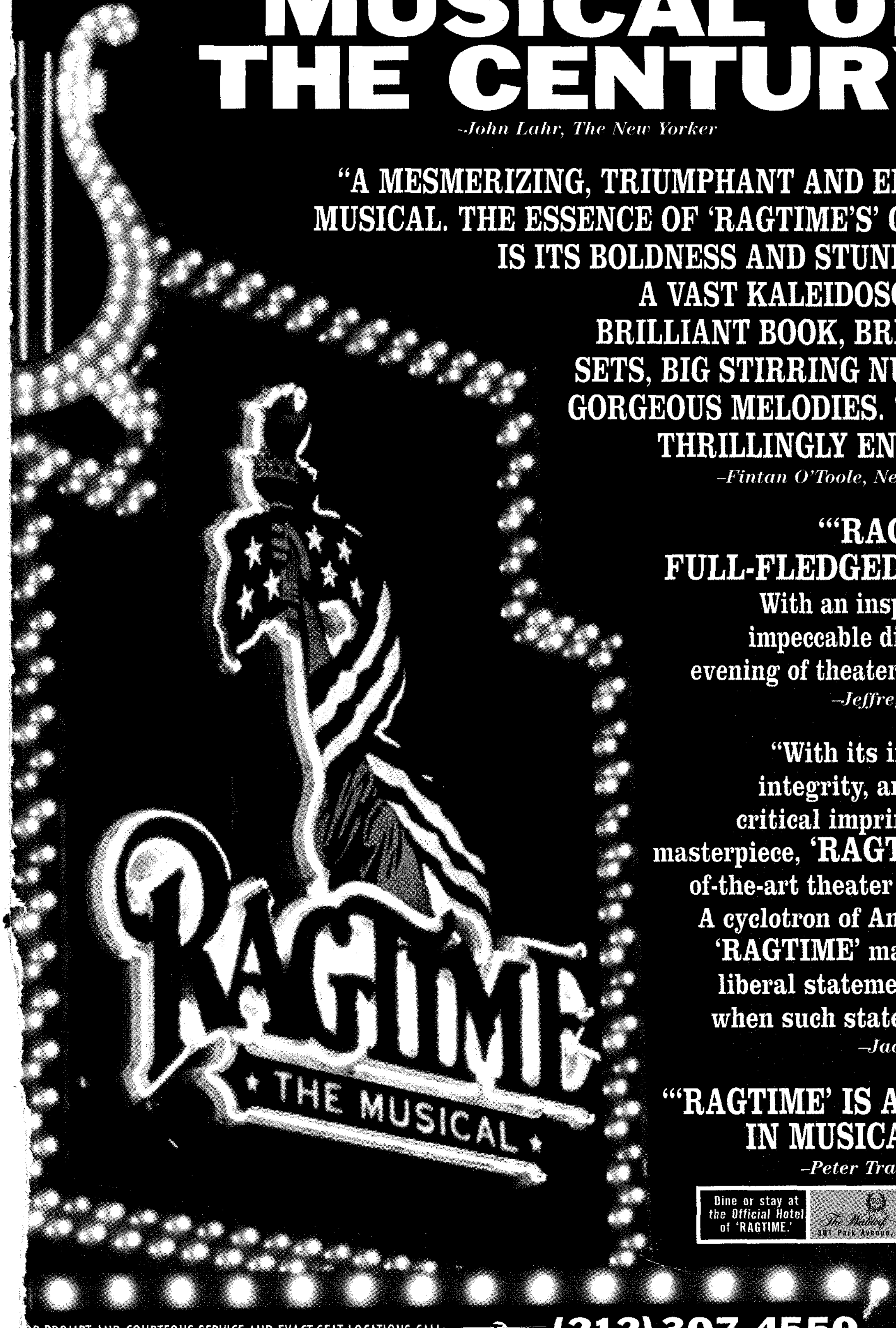

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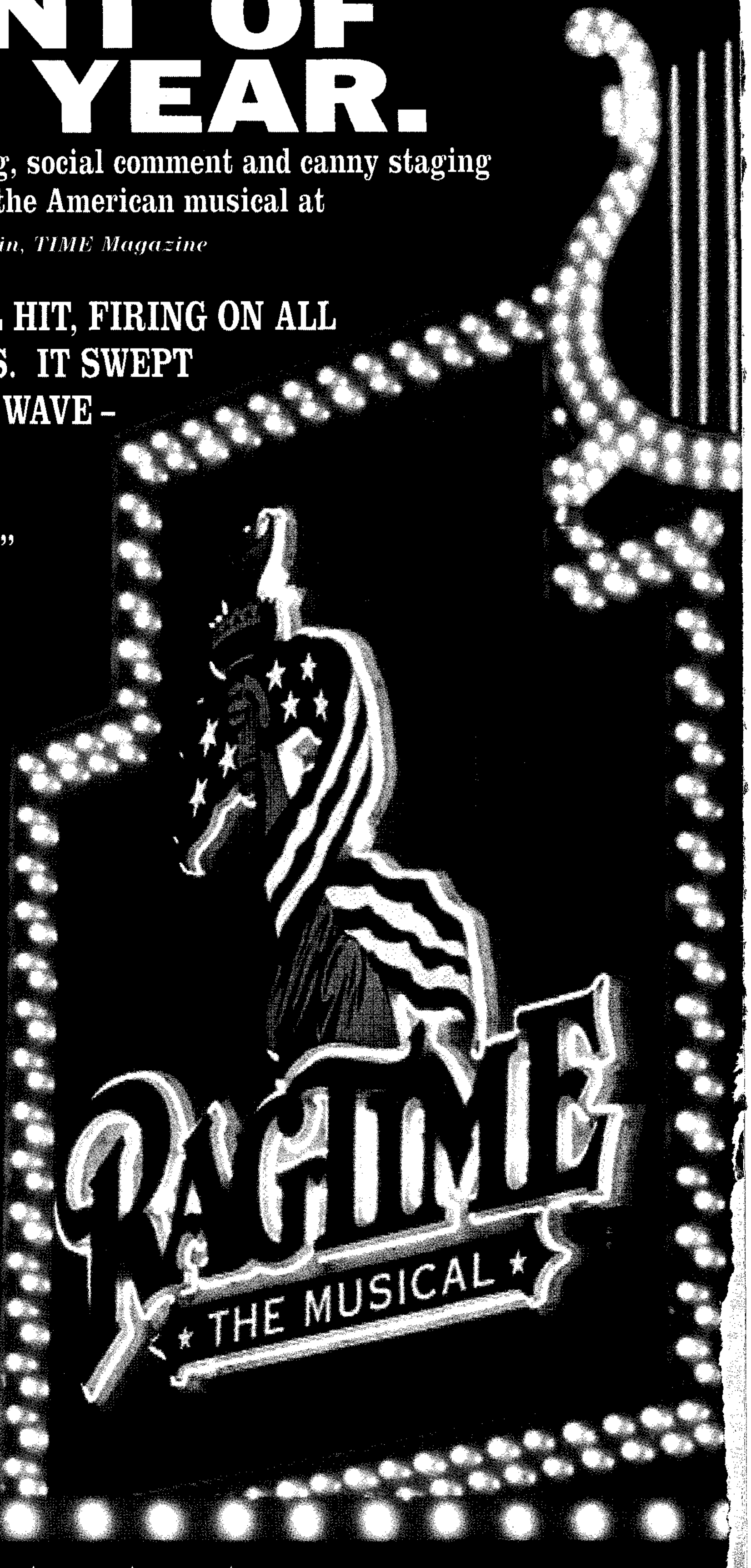

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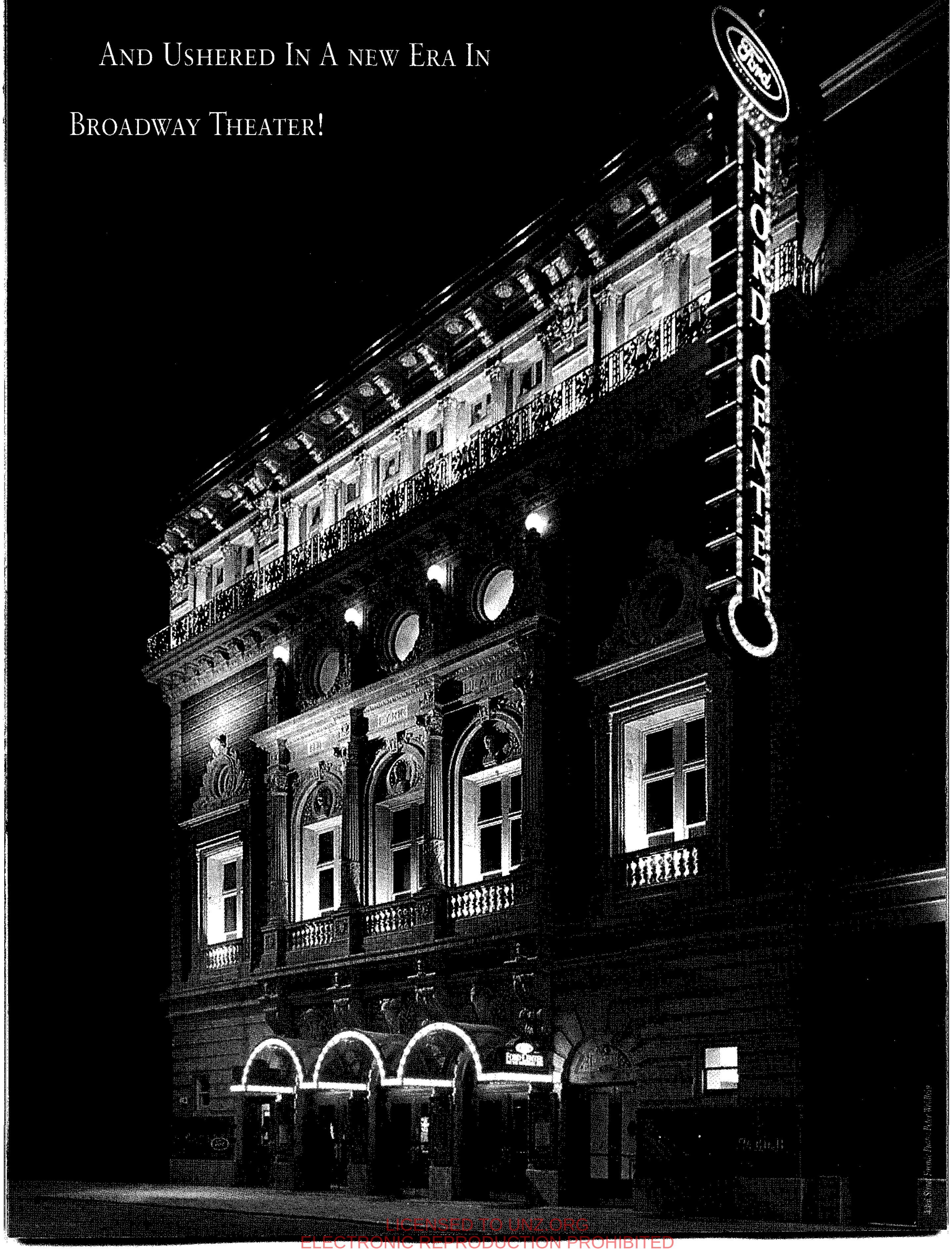

42nd Street Studio Photo: Peter Wolfson

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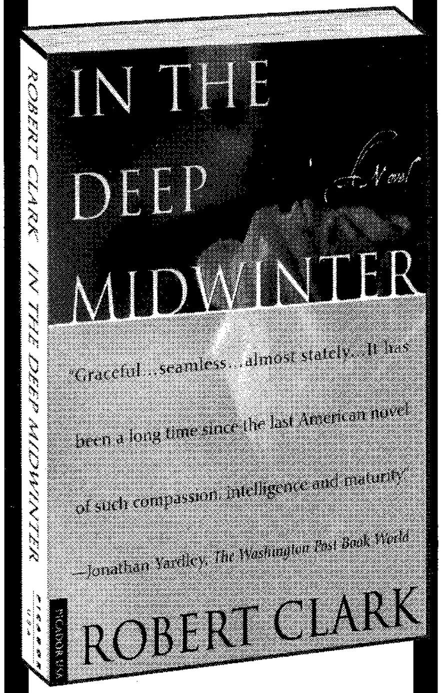

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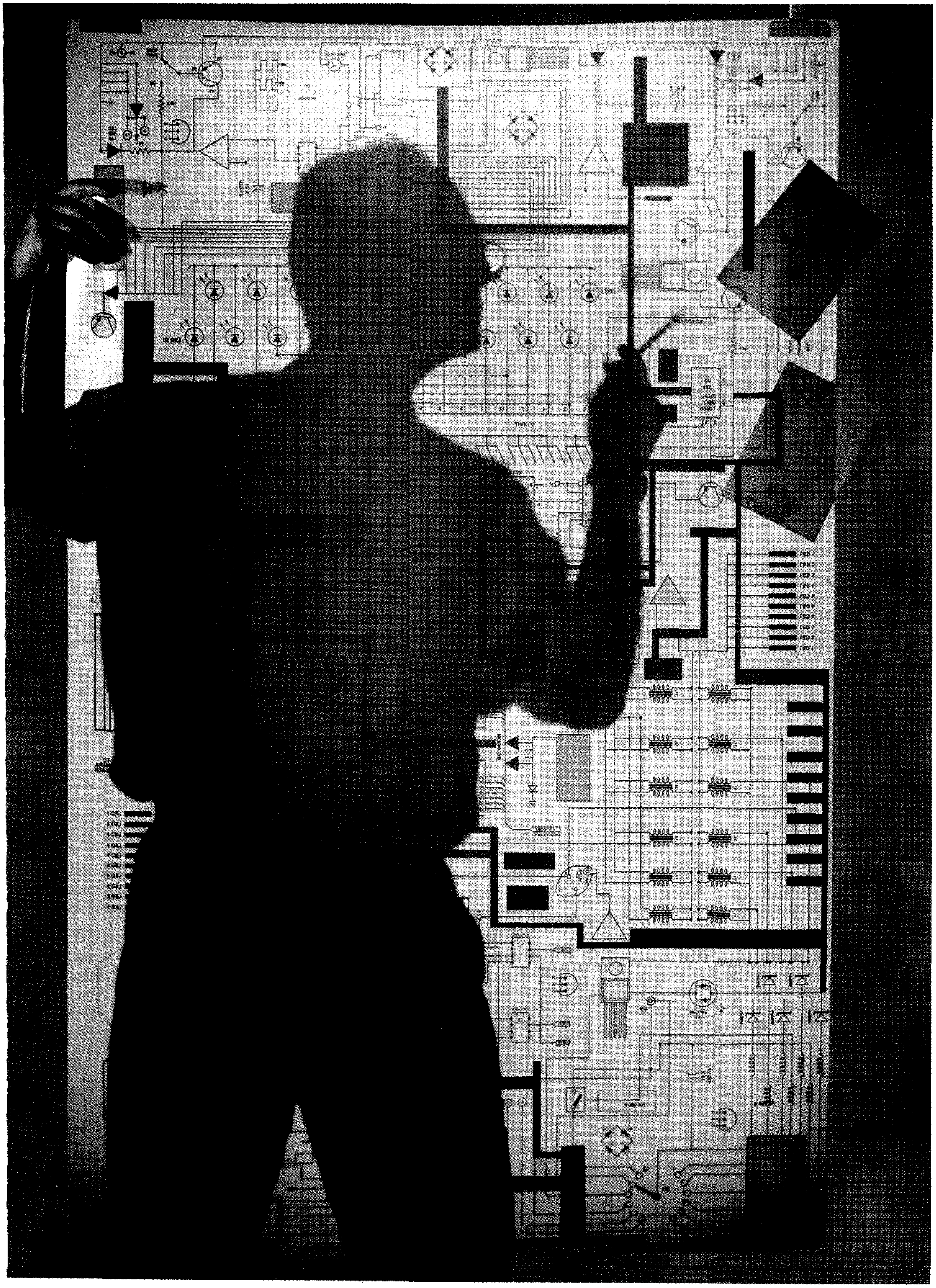

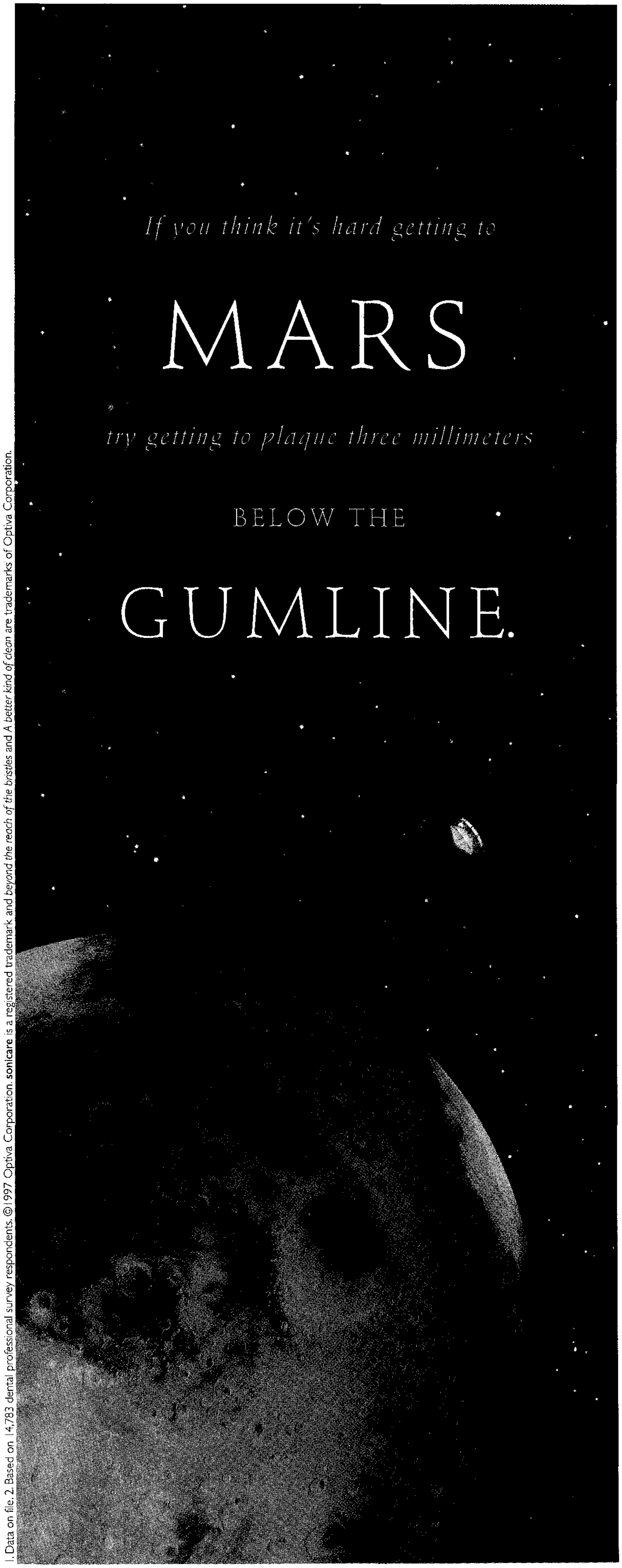
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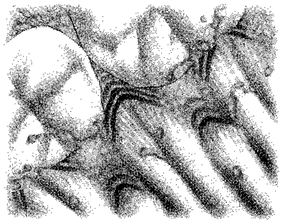

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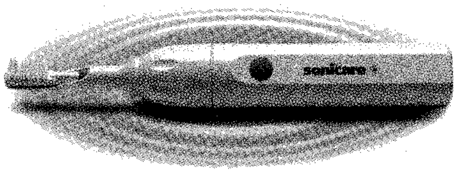

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COMMENT

C'EST LA LIE

The view from Over There.

ONE of the things that people in France keep hearing from people in America these days is that when it comes to sex scandals there is a "French solution," or a "Gallic attitude," which means that everything a public man does with the door closed should be ignored. The American notion seems to be that the French (who wear berets and carry baguettes under their arms, while accordion music plays) have a more *mondain*, boys-will-be-boys view of sexual indiscretions, with politicians leaping from bed to bed, and bumping into their amused, understanding wives along the way. There *is* a difference between American and French attitudes toward these matters, and it may be that the French one is saner. But it's not quite the difference that a lot of Americans would like it to be. The real difference—which is much harder for Americans to accept—is not that the French are less excitable about sex. It's that they're a lot calmer about lies.

Bill Clinton is enormously popular in France, as he is throughout Europe—in part, it must be said, because he looks like the kind of man who might well be having sex with young women in his office. Still, the old aristocratic pattern of arranged marriages and open affairs is as passé in France as it is everywhere else, and the idea that adultery is O.K. if you don't talk about it doesn't wash here any more than it does anywhere else. Love matches mean love pains, and nobody gets around that fact. If anything, the French tend toward more abstract moralizing than we do. The standards are different, but the curiosity is just as intense. The other morning, for instance, the leftish daily *Libération* published a long article by a professor at the Sorbonne, as dense and chewy as *pain complet*, pointing out that the real scandal of the Bill-and-Monica moment is that Clinton is no longer being "modern," since "the care of the other, associated with authenticity, defines contemporary individualism." Decoded, this turned out to mean that, though it is fine to have sex with anyone you want, sending a book of poems to anyone not currently your wife is an unforgivable betrayal. The point of marriage is to remain "the privileged partner from the affective point of view." Even George Will probably wouldn't have thought of accusing Clinton of deprivileging Hillary's affective priority.

But if France remains a moralizing country the moralizing takes place in the manner, and in the spirit, of the old Roman Catholic dispensation. Private sins

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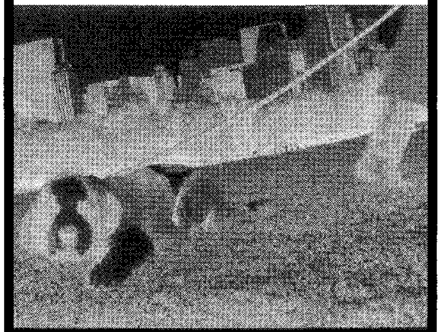
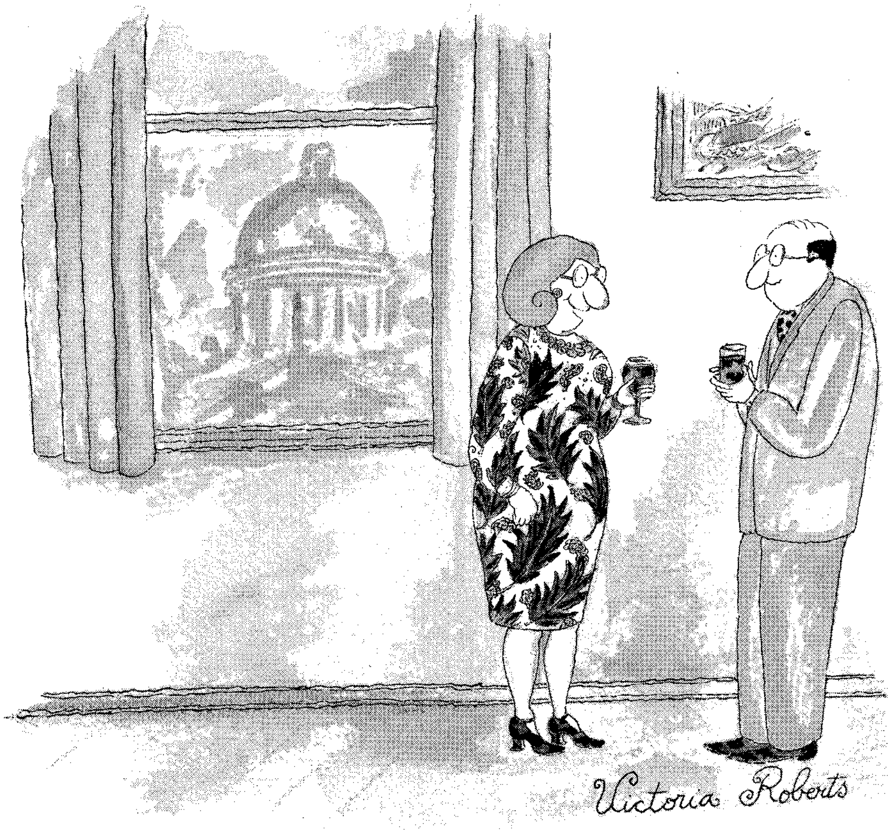




"Where there's smoke, there's mirrors."

• •

are sins, and are extremely interesting, but they require private expiation, private penance, and private forgiveness. What strikes the French as crazy is the American insistence on arbitrating all social behavior—love, sex, politics—in the single chapel of the law. As the French see it, what rules in America isn't a recidivist Puritanism. It's an unreal faith in legalism.

So both standard American lines of worried piety—that a President should be able to control himself at least as long as he is President, and that lying is worse than sex—strike most French people as even crazier than the scandal. "A normal man should go for eight years without any sex at all?" they say, presuming that a husband isn't likely to sleep with his wife much after the marriage has become routine. "And," they continue, "what divine power is invested in lawyers' offices that would compel you to tell everybody about your sex life rather than try to keep it secret as long as you can?"

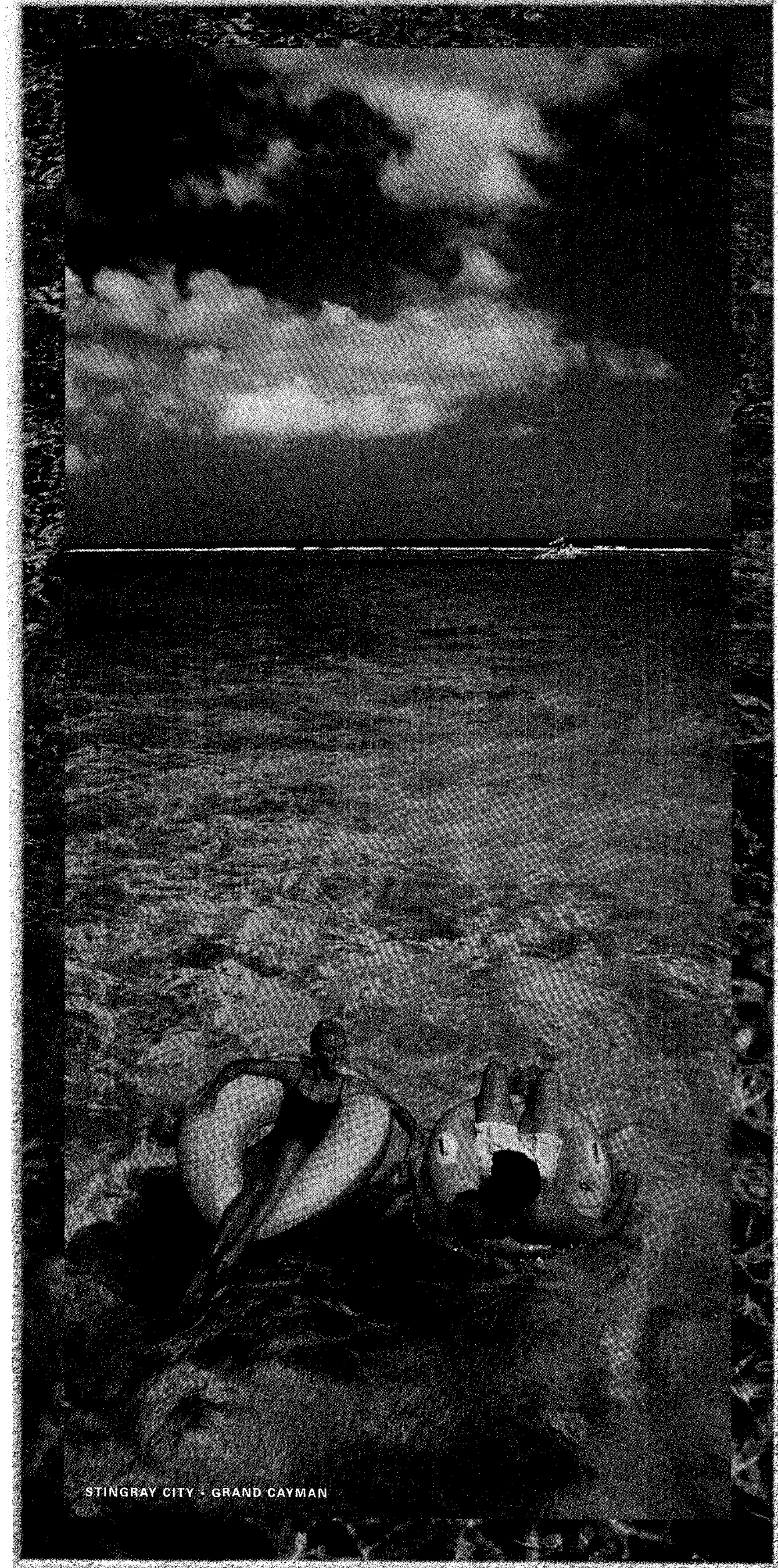
Well, the answer comes back from the Americans, "But you're telling it to a judge, under oath." So? "In the name of the law," writes one amused essayist in the right-wing paper *Le Figaro*. "What cannot be committed in its name! 'He has lied!' we're told. Where is the fickle man who *hasn't* lied?" Considerations having to do with gallantry, discretion, and sheer husbandly self-preservation, the argument goes, not only are likely to come between a husband and his oath but ought to come between them. In another issue of *Le Figaro*, Pierre Chaunu, a religious historian, writes that Americans have "sacralized not only the truth but also civil society" and have given to lawyers the respect that ought to go to God. The arresting—and perhaps instructive—French attitude seems to be that lying about sex is merely another of the social graces. "You cannot have transparency in the social sphere," one French artist said not long ago, "since once you begin to demand transparency in the social sphere social life becomes impossible."

Believing the law to be an instrument rather than a sacrament, the French end up tolerating a lot more official lying than most Americans could accept—and there is a lot of official lying in France—but they thereby live without the apocalyptic atmosphere that surrounds every allegation of a "coverup" in America. In France, the unshocked assumption that ordinary people—politicians, lovers, journalists—lie a lot means that you can talk about lies, and punish them appropriately, without turning every lie into a capital offense. French privacy laws, for instance, are much stricter than American ones, but they result in a kind of public cat-and-mouse game between newspapers and their subjects. The French courts routinely issue judgments, usually accompanied by small, sharp fines, against particular newspapers for not telling the truth, and then the newspaper prints a *publication judiciaire* stating the court's judgment, and the game goes on. When a really big lie is published in France, though, the result is a big fine, imposed quickly. A recent book claiming that two former government ministers had collaborated in the murder of a politician was brought before the judge: the authors couldn't show any proof, and the book was banned. This swift, draconian approach isn't a formula for perfection, but it does seem to keep hysteria from rising to American levels.

In America, on the other hand, as the French see it, every lapse must now have a legal remedy, and the millennium will have arrived only when all social existence has become litigable, and everything wronged—from vegetables to women—has a way to find vindication in a court of law. Certainly, from a distance illuminated only by the light of CNN and the Web it does seem that what is striking about this go-round of media hysteria is less the moral language employed than the solemnity with which the reporters roll out a legal vocabulary they barely understand. Such phrases as "suborning perjury" and "obstruction of justice" have become more magical than meaningful.

In the end, what separates France from America is not a different attitude toward the line between public and private morality but a different attitude toward the law. The French don't believe that sin should go unpunished, but they do believe that society ought to have lots of modes—elections, novels, editorials, confessionals, shrieking arguments—for dealing with the many rich varieties of bad behavior. If there's a Gallic attitude toward these things, it isn't that there's no connection between private character and public life. It's that you shouldn't have to go to court to find out what it is.

—ADAM GOPNIK



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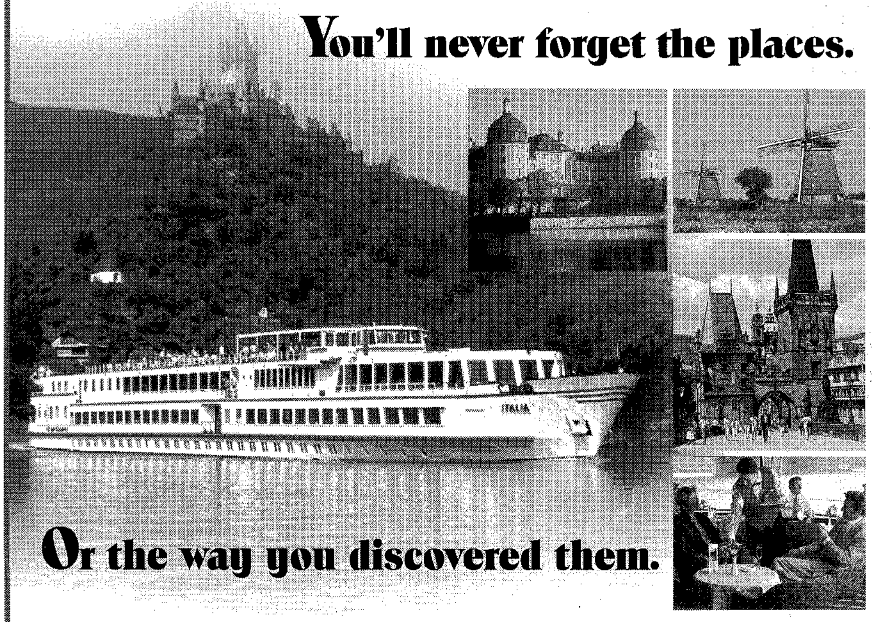
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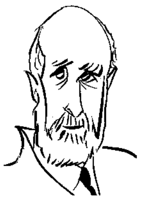


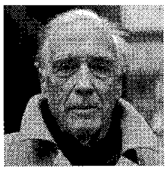
JEROME GROOPMAN ("Decoding Destiny," p. 42), a cancer and AIDS specialist, is the Recanati Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. His first book, "The Measure of Our Days," was published last October.

JOE KLEIN ("An American Marriage," p. 34) is this magazine's Washington correspondent. A film version of his novel "Primary Colors" will be released next month.

BEVERLY LOWRY ("The Sweetheart of Death Row," p. 60) is the author of "Crossed Over," a book about the Texas death-row inmate Karla Faye Tucker, and of six novels, including, most recently, "The Track of Real Desires." She lives in Alabama.

JEFFREY TOOBIN ("The Trouble with Sex," p. 48) has been a staff writer for *The New Yorker* since 1993, and is the legal analyst for ABC News. His most recent feature article, "Casting Stones," about Paula Jones, was published last November.

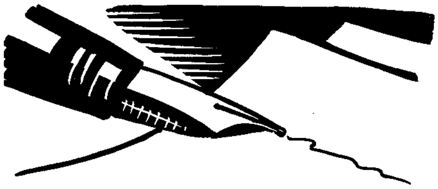
HANS KONING (Fiction, p. 72) first appeared in these pages in 1961, with a Letter from Havana. He is the author of twenty books, including the novel "Pursuit of a Woman on the Hinge of History," which was published last year.



BRENDAN GILL (Books, p. 79) was a contributor to *The New Yorker* from 1936 until his death, last December. His account of life at this magazine, "Here at The New Yorker," was reissued in 1997. This is the last article he wrote for the magazine.

ROBERT SULLIVAN (The Talk of the Town, p. 31) has been a contributor to *The New Yorker* since 1991. His first book, "The Meadowlands," a travel adventure set in New Jersey, will be published this spring. ♦

THE MAIL



CONSUMER PROTECTION

John Cassidy's "The Force of an Idea" (January 12th) reminded me that there's nothing new about a large firm's using its dominant market share to further that dominance by means of technical design changes intended to put its competitors at a disadvantage. The government charged I.B.M. with that very thing more than twenty-five years ago. It's probably inevitable that Microsoft's marketing and product-development practices will continue to be scrutinized and regulated, and perhaps this is the best assurance that other companies' technical innovations will have a fair chance in the marketplace. But it's worth noting that during the decades of government litigation against Big Blue a totally new industry—microcomputers—emerged and, without the government's help, made I.B.M.'s dominance in mainframes far less significant.

JOHN A. MAHER
Summit, N.J.

The question for anyone who argues that technology markets don't necessarily allow the "best" products to succeed is "What do you mean by 'best'?" Software that is more elegantly engineered is not necessarily any better for the customer. Microsoft's alleged strong-arm tactics are hard to admire, but what most consumers really want is precisely what the company has given us: operating systems and applications so easy to access that we can type up, print out, and share information without thinking about how we do it. Someone please tell the Justice Department that if it's really looking to protect the consumer's best interest, it will allow us to purchase integrated software.

DEVORAH SLAVIN
Atlanta, Ga.

THE MEANING OF DEPRESSION

The thing that impressed me as tragic in Andrew Solomon's article about his struggle with depression ("Anatomy of Melancholy," January 12th) is our society's increasing tendency to medicalize bad experience. As a psychologist, I often wonder why good experience is never considered a part of the disease continuum. It seems that we don't want to diminish our responsibility for the behaviors that make us happy, but we do want to blame neurotransmitters for the lack of meaning in our lives. If people want to use Prozac, they should be free to do so, but it "works" to relieve depression only in the sense that it makes people *feel* less.

JEFFREY A. SCHALER, Ph.D.
Erdenheim, Pa.

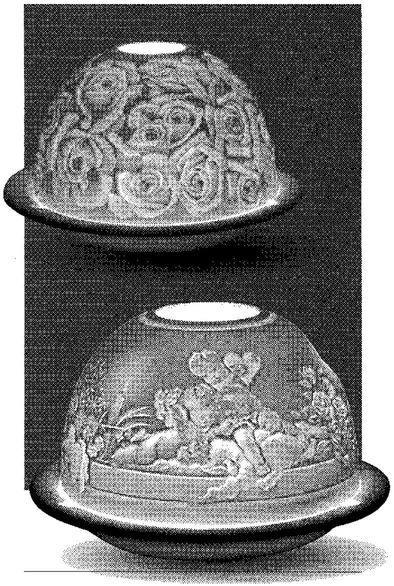
Mr. Solomon's moving description of living with depression is a stepping stone toward the destigmatization of mental illness. I am the mother of a twenty-nine-year-old daughter who has suffered from a brain disorder since she was twelve, and who has had two cingulotomies. My husband and I were cautioned that no one would understand our daughter's having had such surgery, and the warnings were true, but it doesn't matter: our daughter is now able to live a meaningful life. Mental illness is not pretty or chic, but discussing it, we hope, will help counteract the pervasive myths, stereotypes, and misconceptions about depression and other brain disorders. Would that there were others like Andrew Solomon willing to come forward.

JEAN J. BEARD
Greenwich, Ct.

I was profoundly grateful to Mr. Solomon for making the distinction he does between treatment and cure. I myself no longer look for a cure, but for things that help. In the words of T. S. Eliot, "We think of the key, each in his prison / Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison."

ELOÏSE WATT
New York City

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They can also be faxed to 212-840-8489 or sent via E-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.



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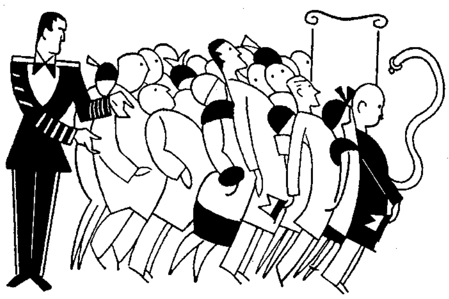

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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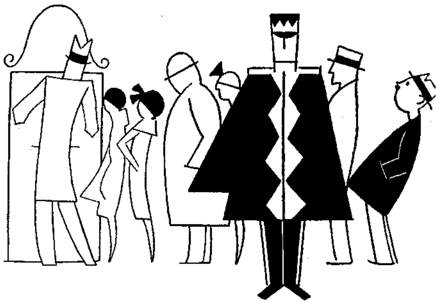


THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Eyes for Consuela—Sam Shepard's new play, which stars David Strathairn, is an adaptation of Octavio Paz's 1976 short story "The Blue Bouquet." Terry Kinney is the director. In previews through Feb. 8. Opens Feb. 10 at 7:30. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Freak—John Leguizamo ("Spic-O-Rama") portrays dozens of characters in his new one-man comedy. Directed by David Bar Katz. In previews. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Hedwig and the Angry Inch—John Cameron Mitchell wrote and has the title role in a musical about a German Cold War bride turned rock singer. The band Cheater performs the score, written by Stephen Trask. In previews. (Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

Lypsinka Is Harriet Craig!—In this encore engagement, the drag artistes Lypsinka and Varla Jean Merman join forces in a song-and-dance version of the 1950 Joan Crawford film. In previews Feb. 5-6. Opens Feb. 8 at 8. (Mother, 432 W. 14th St., at Washington St. 539-7585.)

The Maiden's Prayer—The Vineyard Theatre presents a new play by Nicky Silver. Previews begin Feb. 5. (108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

Mizlansky/Zilinsky; or, Schmucks—Nathan Lane and Lewis J. Stadlen star in a new comedy by Jon Robin Baitz. Staged by Joe Mantello. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

My One Good Nerve—Charles Nelson Reilly directs Ruby Dee in a one-woman show the actress adapted from her book of the same title. Previews Feb. 5-7. Opens Feb. 8 at 6. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448.)

The Sound of Music—The hills are alive (aah-aah-aaaaaaaaah) again. Previews begin Feb. 6. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Theatre for a New Audience—Presenting repertory performances of "Richard II" and "Richard III." Ron Daniels is the director. In previews. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

Three Sisters—The Moscow Art Theatre's staging of Chekhov's drama. Performances are in Russian with simultaneous English translation. Feb. 6-7 and Feb. 10 at 7:30. Through Feb. 14. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100.)

Wang Dang—Tom Noonan stars in his own dark comedy, about a filmmaker past his prime. Opens Feb. 5 at 8. (Paradise, 64 E. 4th St. 354-2220.)

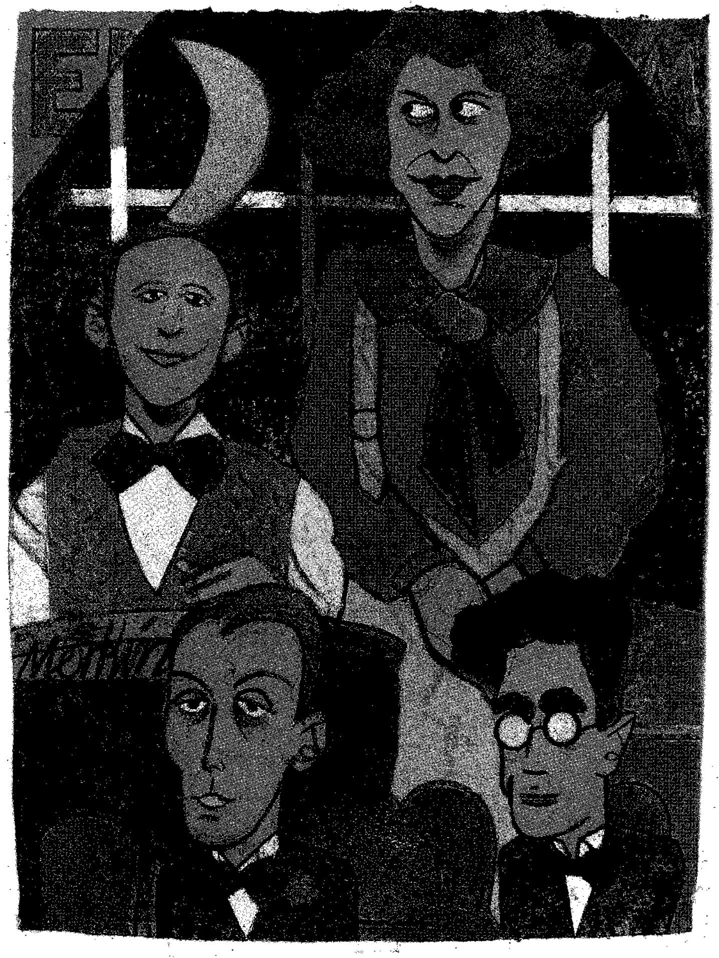
OPENED RECENTLY

The Acting Company—Presenting "Romeo and Juliet," set in nineteenth-century Italy. (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. Closes Feb. 8.)

Bashevis: Tales of I. B. Singer—Three of Isaac Bashevis Singer's stories, beguilingly told by the actor David Margulies. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 354-2220.)

Benita Canova—Richard Foreman's latest concoction is a lush exploration of erotic violence, consisting mainly of a debate between Benita (Joanna P. Adler)—who is, perhaps, the new girl at the bordello—and Madame (David Greenspan), about the nature of sex and the nature of perception. A memorable, smart, and voyeuristic experience. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

Black Humor—Topical comedy, written and performed by the political satirist Lewis Black. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)



Ring Lardner and George S. Kaufman's "June Moon."

RICHARD MERKIN

Black Snow—Keith Reddin's 1993 adaptation of Mikhail Bulgakov's semiautobiographical novel. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Feb. 14.)

The Capeman—A musical by Paul Simon and Derek Walcott. Directed and choreographed by Mark Morris. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

The Diary of Anne Frank—Theatrically, this revival and reworking of the 1955 play by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, under the direction of James Lapine, is generally fine. But the play's realism is also its fundamental flaw. One of the truths we take away from Anne's diary is that we *can't* know what it was like. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/15/97.) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Field of Mars—The audience follows the actors from room to room, through a series of apparently unconnected scenes; light and sound swirl about, action and speeches overlap. Jason Boyd's lighting is impressive, and there are beautiful and powerful moments—but there's little to make them more than fine, disparate bits. Michael Counts designed and directed, and his design has overtaken his direction. The production is by Gale Gates et al. (37 Main St., Brooklyn. 718-522-4597. Closes Feb. 7.)

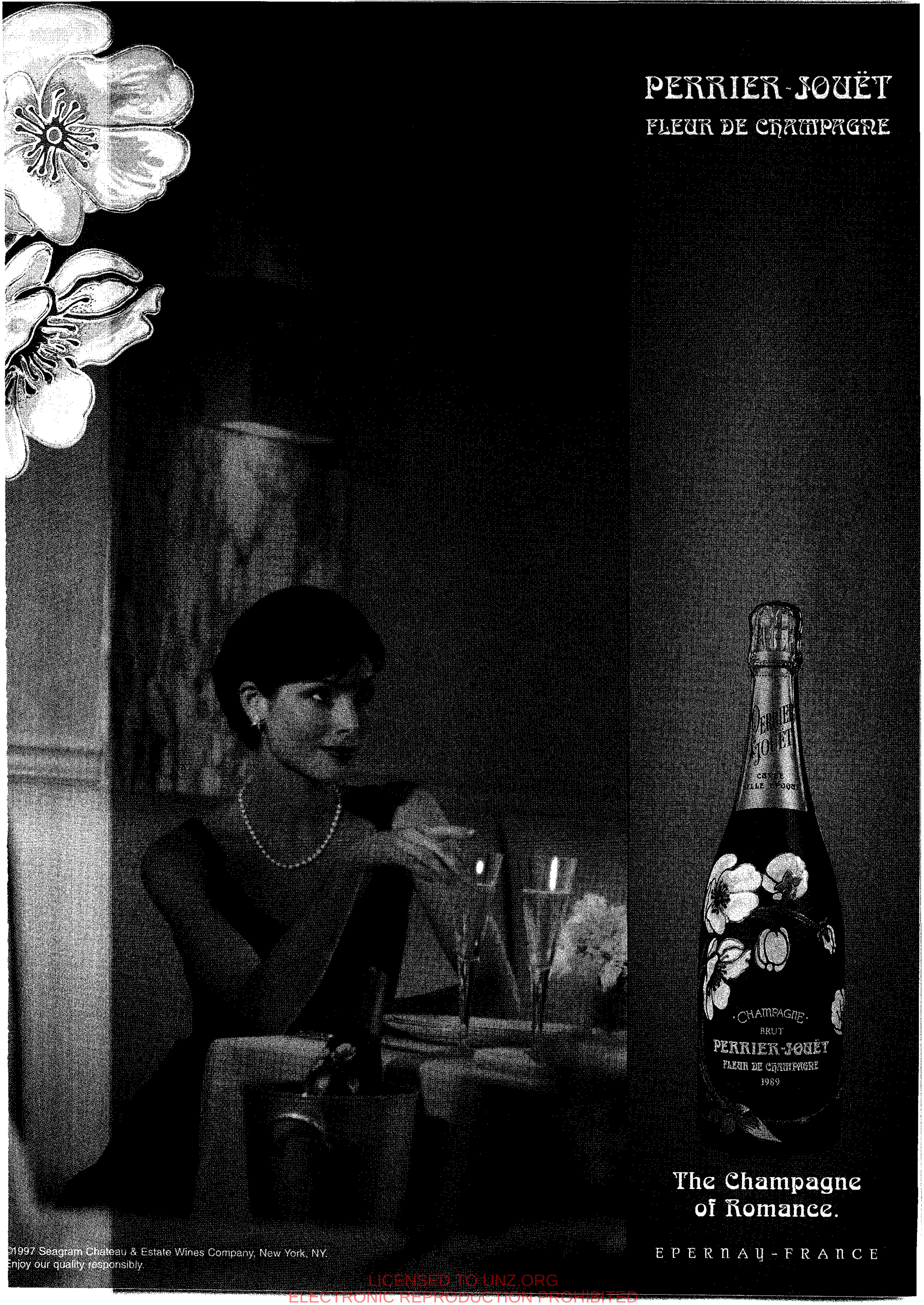
Goose-Pimples—Under the clear-eyed direction of Scott Elliott, the New Group brings a near-excruciating realism to Mike Leigh's bleakly comic 1981 portrayal of the cruelty disappointment can inspire. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes March 1.)

Gun-Shy—In Richard Dresser's romantic comedy, an ex-couple finds divorce as difficult to maintain as marriage. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Feb. 22.)

I Can't Remember Anything/The Last Yankee—The Signature Theatre Company's Arthur Miller season continues, with two slight one-acts. The first is a very funny look at old age, charmingly acted by Joseph Wiseman and Rebecca Schull; the second is basically a rant against materialism and not being nice. Joseph Chaikin's direction and E. David Cosier's sets are both marvellous. (555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529. Closes Feb. 8.)

I'm Still Here . . . Damn It!—A mean little cocktail from Sandra Bernhard, composed of equal parts stand-up, performance art, cabaret, world-weariness, and dish. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 307-7171. Closes Feb. 15.)

Jackie—A complete delight. The playwright, Gip Hoppe, may be satirizing what we think we know about the former First Lady (Margaret Colin), but he does it with such heart and high comedy that you may not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want to leave the theatre. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Joseph Gabriel Magic '98—Mr. Gabriel comes to New York by way of Las Vegas. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

June Moon—Ring Lardner and George S. Kaufman's 1929 comedy, set in the world of Tin Pan Alley, is a loving satire of show-biz and musical-comedy conventions, and it has been given an appropriately loving revival under the direction of Mark Nelson. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

The Lion King—The director Julie Taymor has created a theatrical event far more textured and original than the animated film, submerging the audience in a mythic universe; it's like being in a dream awake. The show's high visual style, however, is in sharp contrast to its low verbal one. (11/24/97) (New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

Marc Salem's Mindgames—The mentalist claims that his highly entertaining mind-reading act is both hocus-pocus-free and scam-free. Still, his fascinating "tricks" seem like magic, and at times you feel like you're the only person in the audience who isn't a plant. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

Never the Sinner—John Logan's 1985 play about Leopold and Loeb, the teen-age millionaires who murdered a child in Chicago in 1924, sweeps its audience into the boys' friendship without ever losing sight of the brutal murder—a balancing act that Mr. Logan and the director, Ethan McSweeny, carry off seamlessly. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

The Old Neighborhood—David Mamet's three elegant, autobiographical one-act plays full of laughter and lament. Serious, beautiful, and short: an almost impossible feat these days on Broadway. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Phaedra in Delirium—An inelegant retelling of Phaedra's doomed love for her stepson, written by Susan Yankowitz. There is no new twist, no modern perspective—simply clichéd writing, and so even the vibrant central performance by Kathleen Chalfant can only hint at the power of the story. Sandra Shipley and Peter Jay Fernandez ably round out the cast; Alison Summers directed. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes Feb. 15.)

Pride's Crossing—Tina Howe's new play is a tedious switchback ride up a mountain of memories from the life of Mabel Tidings Bigelow, who is ninety and once swam the English Channel. Fortunately, Mabel is portrayed by Cherry Jones, who polishes all the tics, fumbles, and feisty outbursts of a nonagenarian to a high shine. Jack O'Brien directed. (1/5/98) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

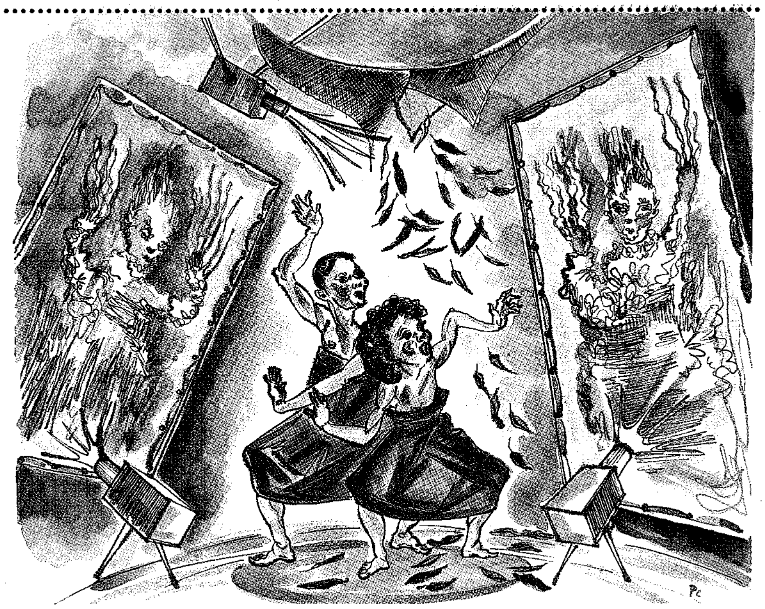
Ragtime—Although Terrence McNally has skillfully streamlined E. L. Doctorow's epic novel chronicling three turn-of-the-century New York families (Wasp, Jewish, and black), what we have here is not just narrative; it's a historical pageant designed along the magisterial theatrical lines of Noël Coward's "Cavalcade" and Jerome Kern's "Showboat." And it's a big, brave, passionate gamble that brings the American musical back to its roots as populist commercial entertainment. Masterfully directed by Frank Galati. Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens wrote the score. (2/2/98) (Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

R & J—Four students at a boys' boarding school mount a production of "Romeo and Juliet," in this adaptation by Joe Calarco. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 354-2220.)

Ricky Jay & His 52 Assistants—The sleight-of-hand artist returns to the stage with an encore production of his 1994 one-man show. Directed by David Mamet. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 787-3471.)

The Scarlet Pimpernel—This new musical, based on the Baroness Orczy novel, has a lot going for it (if you don't count its music and lyrics, which are dreadful and appalling, respectively): its charismatic star, Douglas Sills, Andrew Jackness's sets, and Jane Greenwood's costumes. Peter Hunt directed. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Scotland Road—A young woman who claims to be a survivor of the Titanic disaster, a man who claims to be the great-grandson of John Jacob Astor (who went down with the ship): these are the central characters in Jeffrey Hatcher's play, which is concerned less with the real truth than with how we create our own version of it. The good ideas here manage to stay afloat in a sea of unconvincing dialogue, but only just; at times, the conversation between Astor (Daniel Gerroll) and a doctor who works for him (Leslie Lyles) reminds you of the universe-is-at-stake arguments between Captain Kirk and Dr. McCoy. Also with Katy Selverstone and Scotty Bloch. Melia Bensussen directed; David Van Tieghem designed the fearsome, haunting sound effects. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes Feb. 15.)



Scott Heron and Jennifer Monson, in "Gravity Twins" (see Dance).

1776—Scott Ellis's lean, lively production of Sherman Edwards and Peter Stone's still fresh 1969 musical about the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. (9/8/97) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Shopping and Fucking—British playwright Mark Ravenhill's portrait of dissolute youth in London. Max Stafford-Clark and Gemma Bodinetz co-directed. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

The Show Goes On—A compendium of songs by two seventyish musical-theatre pros, the lyricist-librettist Tom Jones and the composer Harvey Schmidt. For once, they're the stars of their own show; Schmidt plays the piano and Jones provides a charming review of their forty-year partnership, which has been responsible for such musicals as "110 in the Shade," "I Do! I Do!," and that longest of long runs, "The Fantasticks." (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820.)

Song at Sunset—A one-man show about the playwright Sean O'Casey, written and directed by his daughter, Shivaun, and performed by the Irish actor Niall Buggy. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Feb. 15.)

The Sunshine Boys—A revival of Neil Simon's comedy about two irascible old vaudevillians, starring Ye Olde Odd Couple of television, Tony Randall and Jack Klugman. The sandpapery friction that the twosome created so successfully on TV isn't much in evidence—they seem reduced to lovability. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Two Pianos, Four Hands—With the Canadian keyboardists Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

A View from the Bridge—Arthur Miller's tragic story of the longshoreman Eddie Carbone and his obsession with his orphaned niece proves, in this Roundabout Theatre revival, a potent and durable American fable. (1/5/98) (Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300. Closes Feb. 22.)

Visiting Mr. Green—Jeff Baron's sweet if predictable Upper West Side comedy, about two Jewish men of different generations. Eli Wallach, in a masterly performance, finds great dignity in the title character, an eighty-six-year-old widower. Lonny Price directed. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.)

LONG RUNS

AS BEES IN HONEY DROWN: Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY STRIKES BACK!:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **FOREVER TANGO:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GROSS INDECENCY: THE THREE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. . . . **HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHEN PIGS FLY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE:** Century, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE KING AND I:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. . . . **THE LAST NIGHT OF BALLYHOO:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **LATE NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 279-4200. . . . **THE LIFE:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TITANIC:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 239-6200.

DANCE

New York City Ballet—Feb. 4 at 8: "Raymonda Variations," "Schoenberg/Wuorinen Variations," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," and "Firebird." . . . ¶ Feb. 5 at 8: "Ash," "Dances at a Gathering," and "Scotch Symphony." . . . ¶ Feb. 6 at 8: "Raymonda Variations," "Kammermusik No. 2," "Sonatas and Interludes," and "The Four Seasons." . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 2: "Kammermusik No. 2," "Dances at a Gathering," and "Symphonic Dances." . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 8: "Symphonic Dances," "Variations on a Nursery Song," and "Prodigal Son." . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 3: "Allegro Brillante," "Prodigal Son," and "Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3." . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 8: "Raymonda Variations," "Schoenberg/Wuorinen Variations," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," and "Symphonic Dances." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through March 1.)

Smuin Ballets/SF—The Bay Area troupe brings two new works by its director, Michael Smuin: "Cyrano" and "Carmina Burana." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Feb. 3-6 at 8, Feb. 7 at 2 and 8, and Feb. 8 at 2 and 7:30.)

"Gravity Twins"—Cathy Weis matches dancers with a menagerie of electronic media: during her new trilogy of duets, video monitors and projection-screen images of the dancers roll by or float onstage to create a sort of running visual commentary as wry as the choreography itself. Weis comes by such humorous detachment honestly: she has been dancing and choreographing with multiple sclerosis for the past decade, and is more likely to make a barbed joke out of it than a drama. In discussing the twinning at the core of her current choreography, for example, she cites relationships, gravity, and "me dragging my leg when I want to fly. At the age I'm at you have to deal with something." (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Feb. 5-8 at 8.)

Global Exchange/Libre-Échange—José Navas, a Montreal resident transplanted from Venezuela, appears in "Sonata and . . . ," choreographed for him by Bill T. Jones, and other works, including a duet, "Luna Llena," which he choreographed for himself and Dominique Porte. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Feb. 5-7 at 8:30.)

Carnival—Dance Theatre Workshop continues its choreographers' showcase. Feb. 3-4 at 8: **stefa zawerucha**. . . . ¶ Feb. 5-6 at 8: **ellis wood**. . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 8 and Feb. 8 at 3: **keely garfield**. . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 8: ***tiyé giraud***. (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Through March 22.)

Martha at Mother—Richard Move, the downtown Martha Graham surrogate, concentrates on the male side of modern dance in his/her monthly lecture/performance salon, featuring, this time around, Rob Besserer, Sean Curran, Lance Gries, Lawrence Keigwin, and Gus Solomons, Jr. (Mother, 875 Washington St. 642-5005. Feb. 4 at 8 and 10.)

Kevin Wynn Collection—The twelve-member company presents repertory works and the première of "Nitrate Kisses and Smells of Gasoline." (Merce Cunningham Studio, 55 Bethune St. 505-3764. Feb. 6 at 9 and Feb. 7-8 at 8. Through Feb. 15.)

"Underground River"—Jane Comfort & Company presents the stages of a women's emergence from a coma, in a piece for four dancers. "Three Bagatelles for the Righteous," danced to the polemics of Newt Gingrich, Bob Dole, Pat Robertson, et al., is also on the program. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Feb. 5-8 at 8:30. Through Feb. 15.)

Zhongmei Dance Company—The Chinese expatriate choreographer Zhongmei Li, a graduate of the Beijing Dance Academy, performs with her eleven-member troupe in the première of "Portrait Enchantress." Trumpeter Wynton Marsalis composed the score, played by his four-piece ensemble. (Whitman Theatre, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 718-951-4500. Feb. 7 at 8 and Feb. 8 at 2.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

"Highlights in Jazz 25th-Anniversary Gala"—Sure, he runs on and on during announcements (as he's often the first to admit), but you've got to hand it to Jack Kleinsinger: the former city official has been presenting imaginative, affordable, and immensely entertaining jazz concerts, at one venue or another, for a quarter of a century now. The rough and ready tenor saxophonist Stanley Turrentine and the all-woman swing band Sherrie Maricle and Diva—a typically inclusive Kleinsinger bill—get together to celebrate the milestone. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Feb. 5 at 8.)

Judas Priest—The original leather-clad, goose-stepping, head-splitting metal outfit. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Feb. 6 at 7:30.)

Stanley Cowell Trio—In the early seventies, Cowell's career seemed like a sure bet; that it never quite built up a sufficient head of steam hasn't diminished his prodigious talents as a pianist and composer. He's still one of the more thoughtful improvisers around, only now he's an exemplar of the middle-aged "lost generation" players rather than a young lion himself. And he wears experience well. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Feb. 6 at 8.)

Odadaa!—Music and dance of Ghana. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Feb. 6 at 8.)

Ali Hassan Kuban—The singer and all-around funky performer known as the Egyptian James Brown. (Symphony Space. Feb. 7 at 8.)

Billy Joel—The Hicksville native plays for the home-town crowd. (Nassau Coliseum. 516-794-9300. Feb. 9 at 8. Through Feb. 16.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Through Feb. 7: As one of the "Two Franks" (along with Frank Wess) of the Count Basie band, saxophonist **frank foster** established a reputation as a challenging improviser and a resourceful composer, which stood him in good stead when he came to lead the band in the nineties. A smaller unit will set off Foster's prodigious gifts as a soloist equally versed in the dialects of swing and modernism. Mondays in February belong to the **chico o'farrill afro-cuban jazz orchestra;** Tuesdays to the **toshiko akiyoshi jazz orchestra;** and Wednesdays to the **famous duke ellington orchestra.** Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Feb. 8: **herbie mann's america brasil.** Whatever you think of his flute work, Mann deserves our gratitude for his pioneering mixture of Brazilian music and jazz. Although he's an eclectic's eclectic, with a propensity to flit from style to style, this perennial popularizer will stick to Rio rhythms this time around. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through March 7, the amazing **eartha kitt.** . . . ¶ Across the hall, pianist **peter mintun** is in charge at Bemelmans Bar. A genuine throwback to a gentler time, this elegant performer specializes in curios from the twenties and thirties. Agreeable and reassuring without being over-gracious, he's sort of a curio himself.

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Citron 47, at 401 W. 47th St. (397-4747)—A comfy living-room bistro in Hell's Kitchen. The **CHUCK WILSON** trio is out to show that Monday nights aren't just for big bands. Swing saxophonist Wilson's chamber-jazz threesome includes guitarist **HOWARD ALDEN,** a master of pre-bop idioms, and bassist **MURRAY WALL.** Dining.

Druids, 736 10th Ave., at 50th St. (307-6410)—Dark and neighborhoody atmosphere; bar-and-grill fare. A break from big bands at the start of the workweek is welcome, and **WEBBER'S WAILERS**—bassist John Webber, pianist Mike LeDonne, drummer Joe Farnsworth, and either Eric Alexander or Doug Lawrence, who alternate on tenor sax—is another ensemble intent on making Monday nights safe again for small groups.

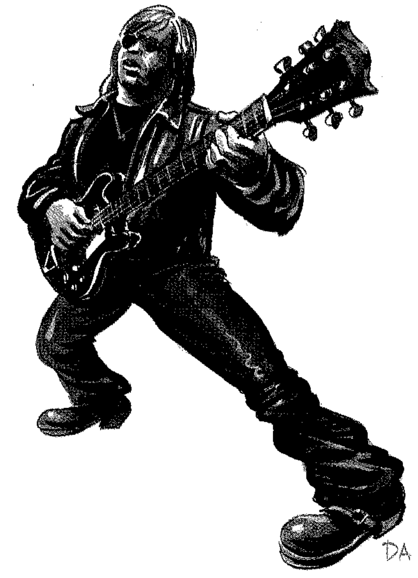
Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A cool, sumptuous piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel, with twenty-two-foot-high ceilings, a long backlit bar stocked with single-malt Scotch, and fine jazz seven nights a week. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Feb. 8: The **HEATH BROTHERS.** Jazz has been blessed with two sets of three immensely talented brothers: the Joneses (Elvin, Thad, and Hank) and the Heaths. Jimmy, a saxophonist, flutist, composer, and arranger, is finally getting his due as one of the preëminent figures to emerge from the bop era; Percy is the renowned bassist for the Modern Jazz Quartet; and Albert (better known as Tootie) was long one of jazz drumming's best-kept secrets, until his recent initiation into the M.J.Q. alongside Percy. Blood ties obviously have something to do with the cohesion and grace that make the Heath Brothers—no matter how infrequently they reunite—one of the classic small groups. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **LES PAUL.** Dining.

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—A new jazz establishment features some new jazz hopefuls. Through Feb. 8: Trumpeter **RUSSELL GUNN** is a young, talented, eager, neo-conservative trumpet player—who could his role model be? Drummer **JEFF WATTS,** a veteran of both Wynton and Branford Marsalis's bands, generates steamrolling rhythms and also adds a touch of historic continuity.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, and a piano. Through Feb. 7: A peripheral figure for decades (due mainly to her deep involvement in jazz education), pianist and vocalist **VALERIE CAPERS** is long overdue for some recognition. In-it-for-the-long-haul players like Capers are a stabilizing force for jazz in this city. She's accompanied by bassist **JOHN ROBINSON.**

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Feb. 6-7: Sonic virtuoso **ELLIOTT SHARP,** a downtown reliable armed with aberrant homemade guitars, a small factory of effects, and a craving to create sounds undreamed of above 14th Street, plays with spoken-word performers Jack Womack and Ronny Someck. Feb. 8: The all-saxophone **JULIUS HEMPHILL SEXTET,** featuring such notable players as **MARTY EHRLICH, ANDY LASTER,** and **ANDREW WHITE,** is keeping alive the dense harmonies and rich melodies that characterized the distinctive work of the late Hemphill. Their singing precision and their improvisatory passion smooth over the gap left when they lost their leader's



Steve Earle, at Tramps.

DOUG ALLEN

sound and centering presence. Also on Feb. 8: Free-jazz and downtown-rock drummer **WILLIAM HOOKER,** who over the past two decades has collaborated with Elliott Sharp (see above), Thurston Moore, and Lee Ranaldo, comes in with a quintet.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. Through Feb. 7: Guitarist and vocalist **JOHN PIZZARELLI,** an agile musician and a pleasant low-key crooner from the Chet Baker/Alfalfa school. He's solidly backed by his brother, Martin, on bass, and Ray Kennedy on piano, making this the best-sounding cabaret act in town. Starting Feb. 10: Singer-songwriter **LOIS WALDEN.** . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Hilary Kole. Closed Mondays.

Smalls, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—This aptly named club features up-and-coming players jamming late into the night. The **JASON LINDNER BIG BAND** holds court every Monday; the **LARRY GOLDINGS** trio has Tuesdays; and the **SAM YAHEL ORGAN QUARTET** is in each Wednesday.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A jazz outpost where the musicians are always top-shelf. Through Feb. 8: **HOWARD JOHNSON AND GRAVITY.** Johnson's been the jazz tuba's best friend for quite some time now. His longtime band Gravity pulls together some other virtuosos, who together show off their amazingly agile maneuverings on the elephantine instrument. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Feb. 8: The **BARRY HARRIS** trio. Whereas most bop pianists approach their keyboard like Secretariat on a good day, Harris is a classicist and a seducer, easing into his runs with a temperate touch and always placing melody before virtuosity. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Zinc Bar, 90 W. Houston St. (477-8337)—Feb. 4: The **WINARD HARPER** quintet. Harper was the drum-playing sibling in the Harper Brothers, one of the first neo-traditional jazz bands to gain attention. Now a veteran, he's sure to have some eager young players on the bandstand looking for wisdom and direction. Feb. 9: A young guitarist with flying fingers and a heart filled with bebop, **RON AFFIF** has a semi-regular Monday gig at an intimate space that caters to guitar freaks—just right for a six-string whiz with almost too much to say. Saturdays and Sundays feature Brazilian jazz.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through Feb. 7: Their stunning 1996 duo recording on Concord could convince you that pianist **BILL CHARLAP** and bassist **MICHAEL MOORE** have blood ties that not even they are aware of. The two emotive virtuosos will be supported by drummer **RON VINCENT.** Dining.

ROCK, ETC.

Arlene Grocery, 95 Stanton St., between Ludlow and Orchard Sts. (358-1633)—A narrow, dimly lit renovated bodega that's the perfect generic environment for three to five unknown bands each night trying to escape obscurity.

Blarney Star, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—Home to fine Irish music every Friday night.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Feb. 6-7: **"JAZZ IS DEAD: JAZZ EXPLORATIONS INTO THE MUSIC OF THE GRATEFUL DEAD,"** featuring Billy Cobham, Jimmy Herring, Alphonso Johnson, T Lavitz, and Merl Saunders. Feb. 10: The bittersweet excellence of romantic pop-and-jazz vocalist **KENNY RANKIN.**

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—David Letterman's former guitarist **HIRAM BULLOCK** and current bassist **WILL LEE** get down to business on Feb. 6-7.

Don Hill's, 511 Greenwich St. (219-2850)—A tidy little SoHo bar with an above-average P. A. system and topnotch local bands on the docket. Friday night is SqueezeBox, a vinyl-and-velvet gay glamfest, hosted by Misstress Formika.

Downtime, 251 W. 30th St. (695-2747)—A friendly split-level bar with a dazzling quasi-Cubist paint job and an above-average pool table.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar hidden inside the Time Café. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is a fine spot to take in a show. Feb. 6: **DAVID POE,** a promising downtown singer who writes songs of bitterness and despair. With Bubble and Frank Bango. Feb. 8: The **SUN RA ARKESTRA,** directed by Marshall Allen. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

The Greatest Bar on Earth, 1 World Trade Center (524-7000)—Live music, dancing, and dining, a hundred and seven stories above the city.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Feb. 4: **OREN BLOEDOW,** bassist and songwriter for indie darlings Elysian Fields, mixes it up with jazz funksters **MEDESKI, MARTIN & WOOD.** Feb. 6: Parliament-Funkadelic and Talking Heads keyboardist **BERNIE WORRELL** performs with his band, the **WOO WARRIORS.** Feb. 7: Punk-flavored ska with the **SKATALITES.**

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—A medium-sized, brick-walled haven of a back room where, no matter who's onstage, the listening is a pleasure. Feb. 5: **JOHN FLANSBURGH,** one half of They Might Be Giants, and his side project, **MONO PUFF.**

Paddy Reilly's Music Bar, 519 Second Ave., at 29th St. (686-1210)—**BLACK 47** plays on Saturdays, and Speir Mor (Gaelic for "big sky") performs for a hearty following on Fridays.

Les Poulets, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The name may be French, but the music here is Latin: expect salsa, merengue, and, now and then, a cha-cha. Dining.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—**STEVE EARLE** (Feb. 4-5) has had the kind of wayward life that makes for riveting song material, which may explain why his "Ellis Unit One" stood out on the "Dead Man Walking" soundtrack. The pain and fear he's singing about are in his bones. Having emerged in 1986 as a country-rock rebel, he's continually edged toward tougher territory. On last year's "I Feel Alright," the songs are spare, gritty, and—unlike the ones on his guitar-cluttered early-nineties albums—dirty to the core. His ravaged voice can make even the thickest-skinned listener tremble. Feb. 6: Though **LITTLE FEAT** has never been the same since the death of its leader, Lowell George, in 1979, this great Southern-fried band always makes up in enthusiasm for what it lacks in genius. Feb. 10: The **WAILERS BAND,** featuring assorted members of the Marley family.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—The **FAMILY STAND** (Feb. 4) ushered in the nineties with an emotional blast of funk, rock, and soul that featured smart lyrics, precise architecture, and three heaven-sent vocalists. After a three-year split, the Brooklyn group is back with a new lead singer and some high-spirited club dates. With **REVEREND DADDY LOVE,** featuring former Living Colour front man **COREY GLOVER.**

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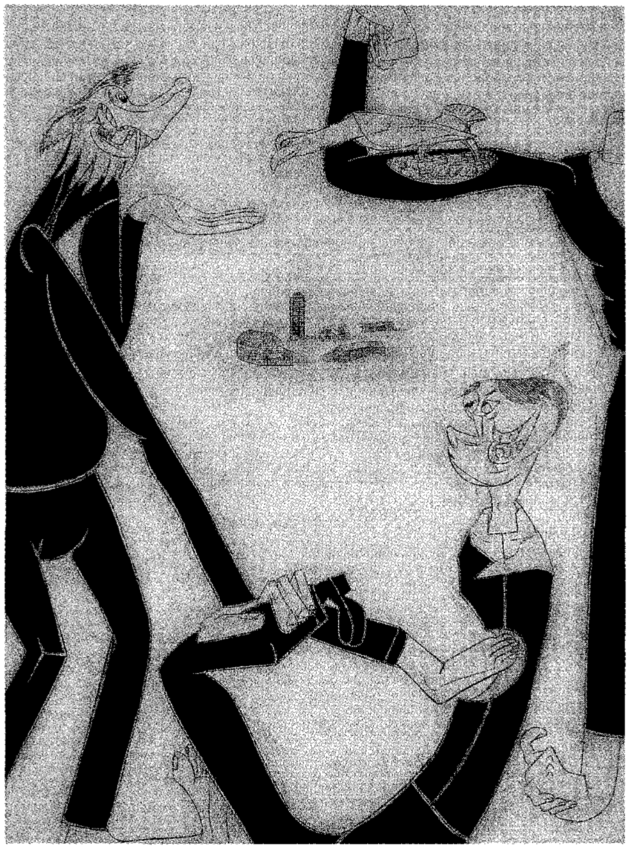
ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era." Through March 1. . . . ¶ An exhibition at the Costume Institute devoted to the work of Gianni Versace. Through March 22. . . . ¶ "Jackson Pollock: Early Sketchbooks and Drawings." Through Feb. 8. . . . ¶ "Richard Pousette-Dart (1916-92)." Through Feb. 22. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)



"Gravity and Float (Cherry)," by Elliott Green (Postmasters).

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Fabrications," four architectural projects, two solo and two team efforts, presented in maquettes and with video links to allied exhibits at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Wexner Center for the Arts, in Columbus, Ohio. Through April 28. . . . ¶ "Deadpan," Steve McQueen's aptly titled four-minute silent film inspired by a famous Buster Keaton sight gag. Through Feb. 10. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"China: 5,000 Years," in both Guggenheim venues, divides the country's art into modern examples (at the SoHo branch) and older ones (here): the latter include jades, bronzes, tomb ceramics, stoneware, sculptures, paintings, and calligraphy. Opens Feb. 6. . . . ¶ "After 'Mountains and Sea': Frankenthaler 1956-59" gathers large-scale works in the thin-paint style of the artist's 1952 masterwork. Through May 3. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—"China: 5,000 Years." The downtown portion of the museum's retrospective of Chinese art is devoted to modern examples, from 1850 to the present. Opens Feb. 6. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—"Arthur Dove: A Retrospective," the first major exhibition in more than twenty years to examine the work of the Empire State abstractionist, who lived in a string of rustic accommodations—a farm, a houseboat, the custodian's quarters of a yacht club, an abandoned post office by a tidal pond—while fashioning palpitant, nonfigurative works reflecting his preoccupation with the natural world. (See also Galleries—Uptown, Short List.) Through April 12. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—"The Nature of Diamonds" looks at many facets of the adamantine stone, from its birth in volcanic fissures to its eventual rise to the heads of heads of state (e.g., on the crown of Peter the Great, displayed in the exhibition's walk-in diamond vault). Through April 26. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"The Furniture of George Hunzinger: Invention and Innovation in Nineteenth-Century America." Settees, daybeds, plant stands, stationary rockers, and a multitude of other chairs, by one of America's preëminent Victorian furniture makers. His constructions reflect the period's gluttonous appetite for the Gothic and the Baroque, as well as the aesthetics of his native southern Germany: there is a kind of Wagnerian madness to much of his work, but its unabashed eccentricity is precisely its appeal. Through Feb. 15. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 9; and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St. (849-8300)—"The Jewels of Lalique" collects the innovations of René Lalique (1860-1945), who brought the languorous lines of Art Nouveau to jewelry design and glassmaking. Through April 12. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Gustave Courbet (1819-77)—Later paintings, most of them dazzling, willful seascapes and rich, voluptuous landscapes. Toward the end of his life, Courbet returned to the landscape of his youth, the Loue Valley in the Jura Mountains, and his superb paintings "Château d'Ornans" and Gorge in the Jura" suggest the magical way place can capture a child's imagination and never give way. Through Feb. 28. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Open Mondays.)

Eric Fischl—Eight medium-sized bronzes, all nudes (both male and female), most of them engaged in solipsistic acts or emotional upheavals. But the emotionalism rings hollow; there's an unsettling emptiness to these pieces which may or may not be what the artist intended. Through Feb. 28. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 744-2313.)

Daniel Morper—Sweeping landscapes of railyards dominated by Western skies, in the luminist vein. The blend of dramatic light and barely populated industrial scrubland comes off as both commonplace and nostalgic—a sort of found wilderness. Through Feb. 28. (Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. 664-0907.)

Jud Nelson—Trompe-l'œil sculptures of dog biscuits, Saltines, light bulbs, aspirins, etc., rendered in marble. Through Feb. 28. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. 759-2345)

"Points of Origin"—An exhibition comparing the work of three artists (Bruce Nauman, Roni Horn, and John Duff) and their mentors (Robert Arneson, Dale Chihuly, and Ron Nagle, respectively). Through Feb. 21. (Parrasch, 20 W. 57th St. 246-5360.)

"Rubber"—Sculptures fashioned from variations on the title material (rubberized cheesecloth, latex on burlap, vulcanized rubber, plain rubber), by Louise Bourgeois, Rachel Whiteread, Bruce Nauman, Richard Serra, Robert Overby, and others. Through Feb. 28. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454.)

Short List—**herbert brown,** Gat, 1100 Madison Ave., at 82nd St. 327-0441. Through Feb. 28. . . . **carol diehl,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810. Through March 14. . . . **arthur dove,** Dintenfass, 20 E. 79th St. 581-2268. Through Feb. 28. . . . **george grosz and philip evergood,** Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 355-4545. Through Feb. 21. . . . **ralph humphrey,** Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227. Through Feb. 14. . . . **kazuko inoue** and **jerry mc laughlin,** Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 988-6870. Both shows through Feb. 28. . . . **donald judd,** Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 421-3292. Through March 14. . . . **craig mc pherson,** Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. 397-0669. Through Feb. 28. . . . **wes mills,** Helman, 20 W. 57th St. 245-2888. Through Feb. 21. . . . **harvey quaytman,** McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 688-5951. Through March 14. . . . **linda sokolowski,** Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 307-5730. Through March 7. . . . **helen torr,** Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 535-5767. Through Feb. 21. . . . **manolo valdes,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900. Through Feb. 28. . . . **john walker,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 794-0550. Through Feb. 7.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Charles A. A. Dellschau (1830-1923)—"Aeronautical notebooks" containing dozens of pages of fantastical airships—brightly colored flying machines with flaps and wings and pulleys—surrounded by patterned bunting, collaged news clips on the topic of aviation, and cryptic phrases and symbols. Through Feb. 7. (Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819.)

Mark Handforth / Dara Friedman—New work by two Miami-based artists. In the main gallery, Handforth has installed a large satellite dish; his only intervention has been to brush the aluminum, sprucing it up a bit. Friedman is showing two films that manage to be modest and pretentious at the same time. In "Total" (filmed in Super 8), she smashes up a hotel room, like some dissolute rocker; the havoc is projected in reverse, but the artist's low-intensity formal preoccupations hardly enliven the material. "Jodie" follows a model at a fashion shoot. Through Feb. 14. (Gavin Brown's Enterprise, 436 W. 15th St. 627-5258. Closed Tuesdays.)

Helen Marden—Abstract paintings and works on paper. Marden, a contemporary of Ellen Phelan, Jennifer Bartlett, and Elizabeth Murray, has only recently come to the fore. Her work veers between the violence of broad, slashing strokes and lyrical delicacy; her colors suggest the East. The pale ghost of Henri Michaux seems to float in and out. Through Feb. 28. (Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. 243-3753.)

Ingo Meller—Abstract paintings by a German artist who uses broad swipes of the brush on raw canvas (although the effect could hardly be called spontaneous). The swaths of pigment are arrayed in roughly gridlike formations. It's hard to know whether these works are intended as sincere painterly expressions or ironic pastiches à la Gerhard Richter—or both. Through Feb. 28. (Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727.)

Daniel Oates—New carved-wood sculptures by the young British artist, whose previous mode was a wanly humorous social realism. Now he has taken a turn for the surreal, and the results are not entirely satisfactory. Through Feb. 14. (303 Gallery, 525 W. 24th St. 206-9300.)

"Chinese Popular Revolutionary Art"—Mass-produced Mao-era ephemera, such as cut-paper window decorations and wall posters commemorating the Rent Collection Courtyard. Through Feb. 28. (Brecht Forum, 122 W. 27th St. 242-4201.)

"Works on Paper"—By modern and contemporary sculptors, including Mark di Suvero, Nancy Graves, Gaston Lachaise, Beverly Pepper, and David Smith. Through Feb. 28. (Two Sculptors, 124 W. 18th St. 645-3584.)

Group Show—Works by Eugenio Dittborn, Willie Doherty, Mona Hatoum, and Doris Salcedo. Through Feb. 28. (Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 367-7474.)

Short List—**PETER CAMPUS,** Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 255-1105. Through Feb. 7. . . . **TERRI FRIEDMAN,** Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. 633-6555. Through Feb. 7. . . . **GUY GOODWIN,** Maynes, 529 W. 20th St. 741-3318. Through Feb. 28. . . . **ELLEN HARVEY AND JAROSLAW KOZAKIEWICZ,** De Folin, 529 W. 20th St. 242-3434. Through Feb. 14. . . . **GARY HUME,** Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200. Through Feb. 28. . . . **JOAN JONAS,** Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. 727-7366. Through Feb. 24. . . . **MARTIN G. LARRALDE,** Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. 741-8695. Through Feb. 26. . . . **OMAR LOPEZ-CHAHOUD,** DeChiara/Stewart, 521 W. 26th St. 967-6007. Through Feb. 21. . . . **PETER NEWMAN,** I-20 Gallery, 529 W. 20th St. 645-1100. Through Feb. 21. . . . **DAN WITZ,** Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. 243-5937. Through Feb. 21. . . . **BETTY WOODMAN,** Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999. Through Feb. 28.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

John Baldessari—"The Goya Series," recent ink-jet paintings and works on paper in which Baldessari juxtaposes fragments of laconic texts drawn from Goya's "Disasters of War" series with seemingly unrelated images; the results are very beautiful while remaining echt Conceptual. This may not be the artist's most compelling show, but so-so Baldessari is still better than just about anything else on the block. Through Feb. 14. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. 966-6160.)

Hanne Darboven—"Stone of Wisdom," a rather sedate installation compared with the extraordinary superflux of the German Conceptualist's recent Dia show, "Kulturgeschichte 1880-1983" (one of the great exhibitions of the last few years). This presentation is serene and extremely dry. Through Feb. 7. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. 431-3685.)

Elliott Green / Christian Schumann—"Gravity and Float," a series of paintings both amusing and discomposing. Anchored at the center of each varnished canvas is a small, pencilled depiction of a pair of prim barns and a silo, surrounded by a floating, rubbery tangle of large cartoon creations clad in painted-black unitards with pencilled-in extremities and faces. (Each painting also features a different fruit motif—lemon, plum, cherry, and so on.) But the faces are not exactly faces and the bodies are not exactly bodies; rather, they're amalgams of mismatched parts—a finger in place of a nose, a sheepish male head peeking out from under a pair of female breasts—through which the artist has arrived at his own arcane and ingenious cartoon surrealism. / Works on paper in which the artist renders aspects of the nightmare of contemporary culture in pretty, wicked colors. In "CNXX," a Tom Jones-ish man in a seventies suit looks down on what could be Times Square or, perhaps, the workings of a lunatic's mind. In "Clothes Do Make the Man," a similar figure wears similar attire, this time emblazoned with "GROAN," "KILL ME," "I'M SO DEPRESSED," and, across his bow tie, "SIGH." Both shows through Feb. 7. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St. 941-5711.)

Elana Herzog—Sculptures fashioned from what look to be castoffs from the thrift store—old shower curtains, chenille bedspreads, a pink polyester blanket, a faded floral sheet, shiny gold drapery—cleverly transformed into amusing, sophisticated formal objects whose poise belies their homely origins. Through Feb. 7. (P.P.O.W, 476 Broome St. 941-8642.)

William Kentridge—The South African artist's animated films have made quite a splash recently, notably at Documenta X. They are based on his vaguely expressionistic charcoal drawings, and sometimes the movement is jittery or very slight—a far cry from the superslick computer animation we've grown accustomed to. The work treats the intersection of individual despair and political crime, refracted through memory and dream; it will appeal to the "Whither humanism in art?" crowd. Through Feb. 14. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. 219-2166. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

ONLY CONNECT

Bolt Reporter (http://reporter.bolt.com/)—For all the teams, clubs, rallies, and cliques, the universal high-school experience is one of isolation: everyone feels cut off from other students, especially those at other schools. That's why the Bolt Reporter, which bills itself as "America's Online High School Newspaper," is such a tonic for the troops. The stories, submitted by students from all over the country (anyone in high school is invited to contribute), might seem local, but their concerns are often national. A recent cover story on the sweatshops behind some popular clothing labels was written by a student at Garfield High, in Seattle; a story on gay teen-agers came from Bay High, in Bay Village, Ohio. At Bolt, local is global and vice versa.

The film and book reviews contain a fair amount of sophomoric editorializing (it's written by teen-agers, after all), but the heart of the Bolt Reporter is Banned on Bolt, an outlet for articles deemed unpublishable by high-school administrators—notably the one a Naperville, Illinois, high-school paper tried to run about a teacher convicted of sexually harassing a student. When the school's principal told the student staff they couldn't cover anything concerning "student-faculty relations," they took their protest to the superintendent, the national media, and, finally, the Bolt Reporter, which not only published the piece but ran a follow-up article on the controversy. Banned on Bolt has brought to light several other once-censored stories, none of them earth-shattering but all likely to have gone unreported or else been buried in unsanctioned underground school papers. By furnishing an off-campus outlet on the Internet, the Bolt is teaching budding journalists a valuable lesson: if you can't beat them, go around them.

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Berg: Violin Concerto; Mahler: Symphony No.5
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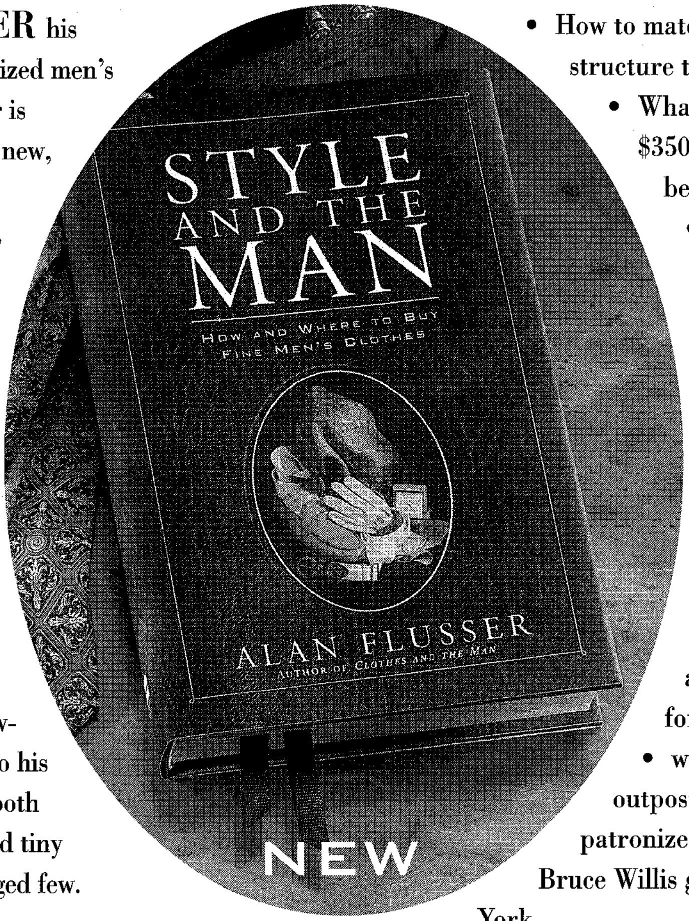
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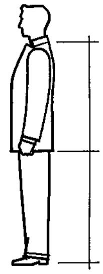

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Anselm Kiefer—"Your Age and Mine and the Age of the World," four enormous new paintings of extraordinary beauty, presence, and poignancy, accompanied by three related oversized, handmade books of photographs. The operatic heaviness that has sometimes marred Kiefer's output is wholly absent here. He has achieved perfect pitch, presenting work that is both apocalyptic and funereal without lapsing into bombast. The pictures are earth-toned edifices rendered in emulsion, shellac, acrylic, clay, and sand, and, with their myriad component bricks jutting out from their surfaces, they have a three-dimensional quality. The title of the show suggests its contemplative tone; at the top of one eponymous painting, of a looming pyramid, are the words "für Ingeborg Bachmann," referring to the Austrian poet who once wrote, "It's not you I've lost, but the world." Through Feb. 28. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. 228-2828.)

Paul Pagk—Salon abstractions for people who don't like modern art. Pagk favors soft-contour geometries in pretty colors; you might as well savor the Benjamin Moore catalogue. Through Feb. 7. (C.R.G., 93 Grand St. 966-4360.)

Ulrich Rückriem—A selection of minimal, monolithic sculptures—enormous slabs of granite, sawed into pieces, and then perfectly fit together again—stunningly presented in the Ace Gallery's series of cavernous skylit rooms. Through Feb. 28. (275 Hudson St. 255-5599.)

Group Show—Sculptures by Kiki Smith and Anne Chu and a painting by Byron Kim. Through Feb. 28. (AC Project Room, 15 Renwick St. 219-8275.)

Short List—**sheila berger**, First New York: Staff Gallery, 495 Broadway. 925-9700. Through Feb. 28. . . . **marie josé burki**, Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753. Through March 14. . . . **squeak carnwath**, Beitzel, 102 Prince St. 219-2863. Through Feb. 14. . . . **george condo**, Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 431-9224. Through March 7. . . . **peter dreher**, Knowlton, 568 Broadway. 966-2625. Through March 7. . . . **pamela fraser**, Kaplan, 48 Greene St. 226-6131. Through Feb. 21. . . . **cameron jamie**, Brownstone, 39 Wooster St. 334-3455. Through Feb. 11. . . . **sang nam lee**, Wimmer, 560 Broadway. 274-0274. Through March 7. . . . **nicholas micros**, Trans Hudson, 416 W. 13th St. 242-3232. Through Feb. 7. . . . **alexandros psychoulis**, Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300. Through Feb. 7.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Christie's East—Feb. 4: Memorabilia relating to pop-culture icons of the past thirty-odd years, including Jimi Hendrix's black-leather motorcycle jacket and Tiny Tim's ukulele. . . . ¶ Feb. 10: Nineteenth-century European paintings. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0400.)

Armory Antique Show—A hundred dealers from all over. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Feb. 4-8. For information, call 472-1180.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Richard Rothman—"Shrubs," a selection of photographs taken over a six-year period, which superbly illuminate our relationship with the often meagre landscape of New York City and its environs. The first picture you see, in the gallery's stairwell, is the most dramatic: a two-trunked front-yard birch has been polled at about seven feet and adorned with cloth markers that look like pathetic, useless bandages; the gently understated title, "Pruned Birch with Ribbons," only intensifies the grisliness. In another mesmerizing picture, a weeping blue cypress sits on its root ball at a Long Island nursery, its branches outstretched as if to say, "I've been ready for a while." The rest of the two dozen clear-eyed images here are no less poetic but sometimes more hopeful. Through Feb. 14. (Sorokko, 430 West Broadway. 941-8888.)

Arne Svenson / Penelope Umbrico—Highly seductive prints of prisoners, from the artist's collection of early-twentieth-century glass-plate mug shots. / New abstract work whose subject is mail-order catalogues. Both shows through Feb. 21. (Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747.)

"Flashback: The Fifties"—A pictorial survey of that decade, through the works of such photographers as Roy DeCarava, Robert Frank, Benn Mitchell, and Garry Winogrand. Through March 7. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)

"With and Without Gravity"—A show of all the pictures in the new issue (No. 10) of the journal *Blind Spot*. Among the artists are Gregory Crewdson, Martin Parr, Lou Reed, Richard Misrach, and Marilyn Bridges. Through Feb. 17. (SoHo Triad Fine Arts, 107 Grand St. 965-9500. Open daily.)

International Center of Photography Midtown—"Weegee's World: Life, Death and the Human Drama," a two-hundred-picture exhibition that spans the tabloid photographer's career. Through March 8. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**anton bruehl**, Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010. Through March 7. . . . **paul caponigro**, Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. 888-1122. Through Feb. 14. . . . **toni frissell**, Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223. Through Feb. 21. . . . **jan groover**, Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166. Through Feb. 21. . . . **yevgeny khaldei**, Schickler, 560 Broadway. 431-6363. Through Feb. 21. . . . **rose marasco**, Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., between 23rd and 24th Sts. 242-7767. Through March 7. . . . **tanya marcuse**, Yoshii, 20 W. 57th St. 265-8876. Through Feb. 28. . . . **wayne f. miller**, De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482. Through March 14. . . . **marta maria perez bravo**, Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. 223-1059. Through March 15. . . . **roberto schezen**, Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070. Through March 14. . . . **david (chim) seymour**, Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through March 7. . . . **kiki smith** and **joey kötting**, Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999. Both shows through March 7. . . . **paul strand**, Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. 505-5555. Through April 4. . . . **ruth thorne-thomsen** and **robert frank**, Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. 226-1220. Both shows through Feb. 21. . . . **burk uzzle**, Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Opens Saturdays at noon; through March 14. . . . **randy west**, Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255. Through Feb. 21. . . . **ernest withers**, Kasher, 54 North Moore St. 966-3978. Closed Tuesdays, opens at noon; through March 7.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 875-5050, and for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800.)

OPERA

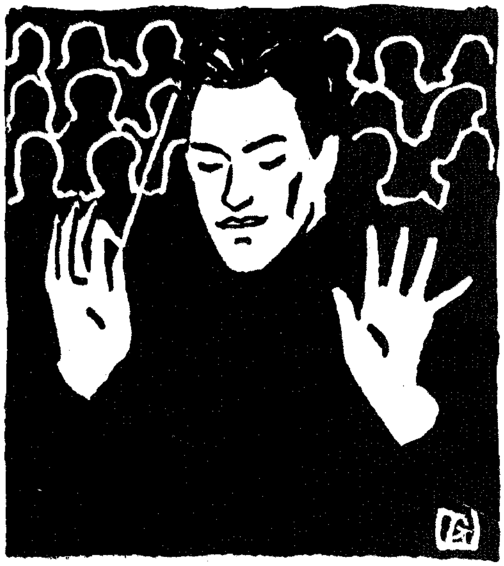
Metropolitan Opera—**les contes d'hoffmann**, with Natalie Dessay, Patricia Racette, Jennifer Larmore, Susanne Mentzer, Richard Leech, and James Morris; conducted by Simone Young. (Feb. 4 at 8 and Feb. 7 at 1:30.) . . . **il trovatore**, with June Anderson, Dolora Zajick, Richard Margison, and Juan Pons; Ms. Young. (Feb. 5 at 8 and Feb. 10 at 7:30.) . . . **die zauberflöte**, with Barbara Bonney, Mary Dunleavy, Frank Lopardo, Gerald Finley, John Cheek, and Franz Hawlata; Edo de Waart. (Feb. 6 at 8 and Feb. 9 at 7:30.) . . . **l'elisir d'amore**, with Ruth Ann Swenson, Luciano Pavarotti, Earle Patriarco, and Paul Plishka; Maurizio Benini. (Feb. 7 at 7:30. . . . **note:** The Metropolitan Opera Club's annual Opera Ball follows this performance.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

L'Opéra Français de New York—The young conductor Yves Abel is already a regular guest at the world's leading opera houses—his past year alone included appearances at the

Metropolitan, the Paris Opéra, the Opéra de Nice, the Pesaro Festival, and the Netherlands Opera—but he still finds time to return to this well-polished company, which he co-founded ten years ago, and which performs at a level one seldom dares expect from a small troupe. In this semi-staged performance, he leads Offenbach's three-act operetta "Barbe-Bleu," featuring soprano Angelina Réaux and tenor Hugues Saint-Gelais. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 5 at 8.)

"Nabucco"—Verdi's third opera, which premièred in 1842 and immediately put him in the operatic pantheon, performed in concert by soprano Lauren Flanigan, baritone Donnie Rae Albert, and bass Simon Estes (among other soloists), the Collegiate Chorale, the Riverside Choral Society, and the Orchestra of St. Luke's. Robert Bass conducts. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 7 at 8.)

"Jérusalem"—More early Verdi. It premièred in 1847, in Paris, but it's largely a reworking of the composer's 1843 opera "I Lombardi." This concert version is performed by soprano Sylvie Valayre, tenor Keith Ikaia-Purdy, bass Samuel Ramey, and the Opera Orchestra of New York, with Eve Queler on the podium. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 8 at 8.)



Yves Abel, conducting L'Opéra Français de New York, at Alice Tully Hall.

JEAN-CLAUDE GOTTING

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—André Previn leads a program that features three of the orchestra's principal players: Copland's "Quiet City" (with English hornist Thomas Stacy and trumpeter Philip Smith), Elgar's Cello Concerto (with Carter Brey), and Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 3. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Feb. 5 and Feb. 7 at 8, Feb. 6 at 11 A.M., and Feb. 10 at 7:30.)

New World Symphony—This Miami-based ensemble, founded and still directed by Michael Tilson Thomas, performed its inaugural concert ten years ago to the day. It's probably the only orchestra in the country whose goal is to turn over personnel: it operates as a three-year fellowship program in which exceptional young musicians can hone their skills before moving on. In the past decade some three hundred have passed through, and this performance features several of them: David Herbert, principal timpanist of the San Francisco Symphony, in the first movement of Leo Kraft's Timpani Concerto; Keisuke Wakao, principal oboist of the Boston Symphony, in the first movement of Mozart's Oboe Concerto; Paul Merkelo, principal trumpeter of the Montreal Symphony, in the Bizet/Waxman "Carmen" Fantasy; Owen Lee, principal double-bassist of the Cincinnati Symphony, in a transcription of a Bach concerto; and Catherine Ransom, a flutist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, in Chaminade's Concertino. Mr. Tilson Thomas also conducts Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony and Copland's "El Salón México." (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 4 at 7.)

Voices of Ascension—Dennis Keene directs a wide-ranging program of choral favorites, by Palestrina, Bruckner, Tchaikovsky, and others. (Church of the Ascension, Fifth Ave. at 10th St. 254-8553. Feb. 4 at 8.)

St. Louis Symphony Orchestra—At Carnegie Hall, Hans Vonk conducting. Feb. 4 at 8: John Harbison's Symphony No. 1, Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Hilary Hahn), and Brahms's Symphony No. 1. . . . ¶ Feb. 5 at 8: Schoenberg's "Pelleas und Melisande" and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5 (featuring André Watts).

Manhattan School of Music Philharmonia and the Columbia/Barnard Chorus—Glen Barton Cortese leads the première of Victoria Bond's Variations on a Theme of Brahms (based on the famous melody of the Andante from his String Sextet No. 1), as well as Brahms's Violin Concerto (with David Fruehwirth) and his "Schicksalslied." (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Feb. 6 at 8. No tickets necessary. . . . ¶ Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Feb. 7 at 8. For information about tickets, call 662-2133.)

Jupiter Symphony—Jens Nygaard conducts a Handel concerto grosso, Mozart's Concertone for Two Violins (K. 190), Scriabin's "Rêverie," and Saint-Saëns's Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Ruth Laredo). (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. Feb. 9 at 2 and 7 and Feb. 10 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

Thomanerchor Leipzig—In the across-the-seas linkage of two distinguished St. Thomas Churches, Georg Christoph Biller directs the choir of the St. Thomas Church of Leipzig in a-cappella works by Bach (including two of his motets), Mendelssohn, and the contemporary composers Volker Bräutigam and Siegfried Thiele. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. 757-7013, ext. 305. Feb. 10 at 7:30.)

Bachworks—Richard Erickson directs the choir, soloists, and period-instrument ensemble in Bach's Cantatas No. 61, No. 182, and No. 70. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 10 at 8. A benefit concert.)

RECITALS

Festival Chamber Music Society—The ensemble performs Beethoven's Variations on a Theme from Handel's "Judas Maccabaeus," Stravinsky's "L'Histoire du Soldat," and Brahms's C-Major Piano Trio. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Feb. 4 at 8.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Performing works by Heitor Villa-Lobos (inluding his String Quartet No. 1) and Astor Piazzolla. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 4 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Violinist Nai-Yuan Hu, violist Paul Neubauer, cellist Miguel Clares Angel, and pianist Stephanie Brown offer Rachmaninoff's "Trio Élégiaque," Schumann's "Märchenbilder" (Op. 113), Martinů's Duo for Violin and Cello, and Dvořák's Piano Quartet in E-Flat Major. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. Feb. 5 at 7:30 and Feb. 8 at 4.)

Ursula Oppens—With this recital, the pianist launches a three-season, nine-concert series in which she intersperses Beethoven's thirty-two sonatas with twentieth-century American works. The opening installment comprises Beethoven's Sonatas in F-Sharp Major (Op. 78), E Minor (Op. 90), D Minor (Op. 31, No. 2), and A Major (Op. 101), and Amnon Wolman's "New York" (for two interactive Yamaha Disklaviers). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Feb. 5 at 8.)

Margaret Leng Tan and the Downtown Chamber Orchestra Players—Ms. Tan performs works for toy piano, by Dary John Mizelle (a première), William Duckworth, Julia Wolfe, Toby Twining, and Guy Klucevsek; the ensemble, conducted by Mimi Stern-Wolfe, also offers Elodie Lauten's "Akasha; or, the Realm of the Unknowable." (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Feb. 5 at 8.)

ANY Art Festival—The name stands for "Austria/New York," and the programs involve contemporary composer-musicians from Austria who are principally active here. Feb. 5: Chamber and choral pieces by Gerold Amann and double-bassist Peter Herbert. . . . ¶ Feb. 6: Chamber music by percussionist Lukas Ligeti and trumpeter Franz Hackl. . . . ¶ Feb. 7: Ensemble works by Mr. Herbert and guitarist Wolfgang Muthspiel. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. For information about tickets, call 718-388-1809. Evenings at 8.)

Škampa String Quartet—The Czech foursome offers a pair of concerts. Feb. 6 at 8: Quartets by Haydn (in E-Flat Major, Op. 1, No. 2), Petr Eben, and Dvořák (in F Major, Op. 96, the "American"). (Weill Recital Hall.) . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 8: Quartets by Mozart (in D Major, K. 575), Janáček (his First), and Beethoven (in E-Flat Major, Op. 127). (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Piano quartets by Mozart (in E-Flat Major), Mendelssohn (in B Minor), and Brahms (in C Minor), performed by violinist Mark Kaplan, violist Toby Hoffman, cellist Gary Hoffman, and pianist David Golub. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 6 at 8 and Feb. 8 at 5.)

Guarneri Quartet—The ensemble plays Beethoven's String Quartets in C Minor (Op. 18, No. 4), F Major (Op. 18, No. 1), and C-Sharp Minor (Op. 131). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Feb. 7 at 8.)

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LISTENING BOOTH

Mozartean Morsels—The Stadler Trio's February 8 recital at the Frick brings to mind the group's namesake, Anton Stadler, an undependable, indolent character who happened to be the most spectacularly gifted clarinettist in seventeen-eighties Vienna. He was one of Mozart's best buddies, and he inspired the composer's three famous masterpieces for the instrument, the "Kegelstatt" Trio (K. 498), the Quintet (K. 581), and the Concerto (K. 622). Mozart left unfinished a second Clarinet Quintet for Stadler, in B-Flat Major. The ingenious Mozart scholar Robert Levin has developed this sketch into a seven-minute-long Allegro of surpassing elegance, and it would take a fine ear indeed to guess that Mozart hadn't written out every note of it himself. Jiří Krejčí and members of the Pro Arte Antiqua Praha have released a meticulously measured period-instrument performance (Arta F1-0079-2), along with three clarinet quartets published in 1790 by the Bohemian composer Václav Pichl—thoroughly enjoyable pieces that nevertheless remind us how far Mozart stood above the crowd.

The same could be said of a disk of oboe quartets (Harmonia Mundi HMU 907220) featuring Paul Goodwin, performing on a period instrument, and the Terzetto string trio. Mozart's F-Major Quartet (K. 370) certainly leaves similarly scored works by Louis Massonneau, Carl Stamitz, and Franz Krommer in the dust. But Goodwin saves the most intriguing treat for last, a one-movement Adagio for English horn and strings, worked out from a Mozart sketch in the Salzburg Mozarteum. It develops from the same melodic material as the composer's supernal motet "Ave Verum Corpus," and the timbre of the low double-reed invests this music with an arresting, poignant solemnity.

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Sanford Sylvan—The baritone performs an all-American program of songs by Thomson, Barber (his "Hermit Songs"), Earl Kim, Harbison, David Leisner, and Wes York; with pianist David Breitman. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 8 at 2.)

Pinchas Zukerman—With pianist Marc Neikrug, performing violin sonatas by Mozart (in B-Flat Major, K. 378) and Mendelssohn (in F Major, Op. 94), as well as Schumann's "Märchenbilder" (Op. 113), for viola. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Feb. 8 at 3.)

Sheri Greenawald and James Westman—Soprano and baritone, with pianist Craig Rutenberg, performing songs by Beethoven, Berg, Copland, and others. (Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. 685-0008, ext. 347. Feb. 8 at 4.)

Stadler Trio—Here's an unusual ensemble: three basset horns. A sort of alto clarinet pitched a third lower than the standard model, the instrument was invented in the 1760s. Mozart loved the basset horn (it's no coincidence that the trio is named after the composer's favorite clarinettist), and it was occasionally used by such later masters as Beethoven and Mendelssohn as well. This all-Mozart program includes the first and third of his B-Flat-Major Divertimenti (K. 439b), several of the Duos (K. 487, originally composed for horns), and transcriptions of several operatic arias. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Feb. 8 at 5.)

Daniel Barenboim—Performing Debussy's Preludes for Piano (Book One), as well as Beethoven's Sonatas in C Minor (Op. 13, the "Pathétique") and E Major (Op. 109). (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 9 at 7:30.)

Seymour Lipkin—Pianist, performing Beethoven's Sonatas in F Major (Op. 10, No. 2), A-Flat Major (Op. 26), and B-Flat Major (Op. 106, the "Hammerklavier"). (Lang Recital Hall, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Feb. 10 at 7.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Black History Month—While cataloguing its holdings recently, the Brooklyn Historical Society discovered a rare copy of the Emancipation Proclamation, one of forty-eight signed by President Lincoln and sold in Philadelphia in 1864 to raise money for the war effort. It's included in the Society's exhibit "In Pursuit of Freedom: African-Americans in Brooklyn and the Antislavery Movement," which also details the careers of such Kings County residents as the Reverend James W. C. Pennington, a fugitive slave turned abolitionist, and Maria Stewart, one of the first black women to speak publicly on behalf of African-American rights. (Brooklyn Borough Hall, 209 Joralemon St. Weekdays, 9-5. Through Feb. 27.)

Readings—Feb. 4 at 8: By Dublin native and *Daily News* drama critic Fintan O'Toole, from "The Lie of the Land," his collection of essays about present-day Ireland. (Rocky Sullivan's Pub, 129 Lexington Ave., at 29th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 7:30: By *New Yorker* editor Deborah Garrison, from her new book of poetry, "A Working Girl Can't Win." (Limbo, 47 Avenue A, at 4th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 8: By Galway Kinnell, from his poetry. (Stella Adler Conservatory, 419 Lafayette St. For reservations, which are required, call 260-0525.)

Talks—Feb. 4 at 6: Jerusalem-born cultural critic Edward Said considers emigration and memory. (Celeste Bartos Forum, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.) . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 12:30: Ralph Lee, puppeteer and founder of Greenwich Village's annual Halloween parade, talks about his work. (New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 7: Julie Taymor discusses "The Lion King: Pride Rock on Broadway," her new book about directing and designing the musical. (Barnes & Noble, Broadway at 66th St. No tickets necessary.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Crescent City Chronicles

"HISTORY is more important in New Orleans than it is in a lot of other American cities," says the writer John M. Barry. "The internal rivalries of different groups are more important here." The author of **Rising Tide** (Simon & Schuster), an epic account of the 1927 Mississippi River flood, finds the New Orleans story well told in the historian S. Frederick Starr's **Southern Comfort** (M.I.T. Press), an account of the city's Garden District which highlights the conflicts between European- and American-born aristocrats during the nineteenth-century development of that upscale neighborhood. A good companion piece to the Starr book, Barry feels, is Lyle Saxon's **Fabulous New Orleans** (Pelican), a collection of vignettes by a onetime reporter for the *Times-Picayune*. Saxon lived in the French Quarter and, according to Barry, "had an ongoing open house the entire time he lived there."

As for the many works of fiction inspired by the Crescent City, Barry says that John Kennedy Toole's **A Confederacy of Dunces** (Grove) evokes "the absurd and Third World nature of New Orleans," and that Michael Ondaatje's **Coming Through Slaughter** (Random House), a fictionalization of the life of cornet player Buddy Bolden, "captures the lyricism and sensuality of the city."

Of course, the two great South Louisiana traditions, political corruption and Mardi Gras, have been exhaustively chronicled. For the former, Barry admires Glen Jeansonne's detailed **Leander Perez: Boss of the Delta** (University of Southwestern Louisiana), the story of the powerful and brutal politician who ruled the parishes of Plaquemines and St. Bernard's for forty years. He also likes **History of the Boston Club** (out of print), by Stuart O. Landry, a club member. The 1938 book is "unwittingly revealing about a class and a time," Barry says, "and about a way of looking at the world which still exists in New Orleans. Outsiders think Mardi Gras is about the parades, but Mardi Gras is not about the parades. It's about the balls, which are closed."

EVER MEULEN

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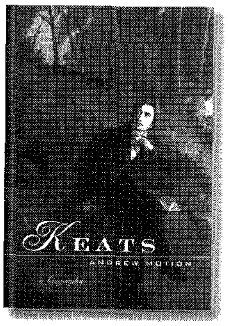

KEATS
ANDREW MOTION
a biography

Keats

by Andrew Motion

Here is a compelling new biography of John Keats, who helped define the modern paradigm of the life of a poet. The author presents Keats's tragic story in the political and social contexts in which he and his work came to maturity. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

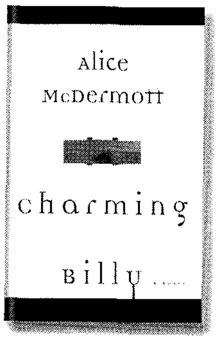
Pub. Price $35.00
B&N Price $28.00

Charming Billy

by Alice McDermott

In this witty and haunting novel set in the Bronx, a group of friends and family gather together to reminisce about the life of the late Billy Lynch, a dearly departed member of their tightly knit Irish-American community. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

Pub. Price $22.00
B&N Price $17.60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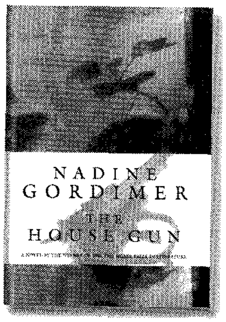

NADINE
GORDIMER
THE
HOUSE GUN

The House Gun

by Nadine Gordimer

From Nobel Prize-winning author Nadine Gordimer comes this provocative new novel in which a mother and father are faced with an unthinkable test of love and loyalty when their son murders his male lover. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

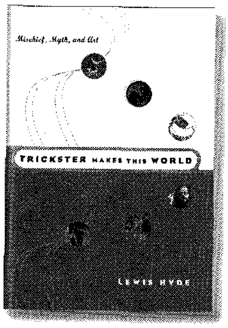
Pub. Price $24.00
B&N Price $19.20

Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth, and Art

by Lewis Hyde

In a captivating investigation, the author explores tricksters throughout the ages, viewing these complex figures as embodiments of the playful and disruptive sides of the human imagination. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

Pub. Price $26.00
B&N Price $20.80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THE MOVIES

OPENINGS

Blues Brothers 2000—A comedy that picks up eighteen years after the original "Blues Brothers" left off, with Dan Aykroyd reprising his role as Elwood Blues. Written by Aykroyd and John Landis, who again directs. Also starring John Goodman and Joe Morton. Opening Feb. 6. (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Metro Cinema, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Waverly.)

Mother and Son—Director Alexander Sokurov's tale of a son caring for his dying mother in rural Russia. In Russian. Opening Feb. 4. (Film Forum.)

The Next Step—A drama directed by Christian Faber, about the adversities facing an aging Broadway dancer (Rick Negron). Opening Feb. 6. (Village East Cinemas.)

Nil by Mouth—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Feb. 6. (Angelika Film Center.)

Paul Monette: The Brink of Summer's End—A documentary written and directed by Monte Bramer, about the late writer and gay activist. Opening Feb. 6. (Quad Cinema.)

Ratchet—A thriller by writer-director John Johnson, in which a filmmaker (Tom Gilroy) starts stealing ideas from another writer's screenplay. Opening Feb. 6. (Village East Cinemas.)

The Replacement Killers—Reviewed below in Film Notes. Opening Feb. 6.

Stephen King's The Night Flier—A serial-killer thriller, directed by Mark Pavia, who wrote the screenplay with Jack O'Donnell. Opening Feb. 6. (Embassy 3 and Gotham Cinema.)

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

The Apostle—Produced, written, and directed by its star, Robert Duvall, this film addresses without condescension or glibness a subject—religious conviction—that Hollywood generally caricatures. Duvall plays Sonny, a charismatic Pentecostal preacher who dresses in white three-piece suits and has so antagonized his wife (Farrah Fawcett) with his philandering that she's taken up with a younger minister and wrested control of his church. After bashing his rival with a baseball bat, Sonny leaves Texas and shows up in Bayou Boutte, Louisiana, where he rebuilds a church and infuses his mostly black congregants with spiritual ardor before his past catches up with him. Duvall's performance is so passionate, so energized, that it's almost eerie: is Sonny acting him or is he acting Sonny? The supporting players include John Beasley, June Carter Cash, Miranda Richardson, and Billy Bob Thornton.—*Daphne Merkin* (2/2/98) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.)

Arsène Lupin (1932)—John Barrymore is a suave gentleman thief who poses as a duke in Paris in order to fleece the rich; Lionel Barrymore plays an agonized, limping detective on the lighthearted thief's trail. This was the Barrymore brothers' first film together, and John gets to show a little of his humor, but Lionel was already making a profession out of crankiness. The movie is mildly amusing in spots, but it isn't much fun. Directed by Jack Conway.—*Pauline Kael* (Museum of Modern Art; Feb. 9.)

As Good as It Gets—A romantic comedy directed and co-written (with Mark Andrus) by James L. Brooks, in which an improbable trio overcomes a heap of troubles and finds collective happiness, sitcom style. Jack Nicholson stars as a romance novelist with a seriously alienating manner, Helen Hunt is a waitress with a young son who has a life-threatening disease, and Greg Kinnear is a gay painter with a sweet smile and no visible erotic attachments. You keep expecting to hear a laugh track.—*D.M.* (1/5/98) (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

The Boxer—Daniel Day-Lewis plays a former I.R.A. recruit who returns to Belfast after fourteen years in prison and rebuilds a community boxing club in the hope of uniting Protestants and Catholics; along the way he takes up with a youthful flame (Emily Watson) now married to his best friend. Jim Sheridan's film is stronger on atmosphere than on specifics, but the quiet intensity of Day-Lewis's performance gives it genuine force.—*D.M.* (1/19/98) (Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Waverly.)

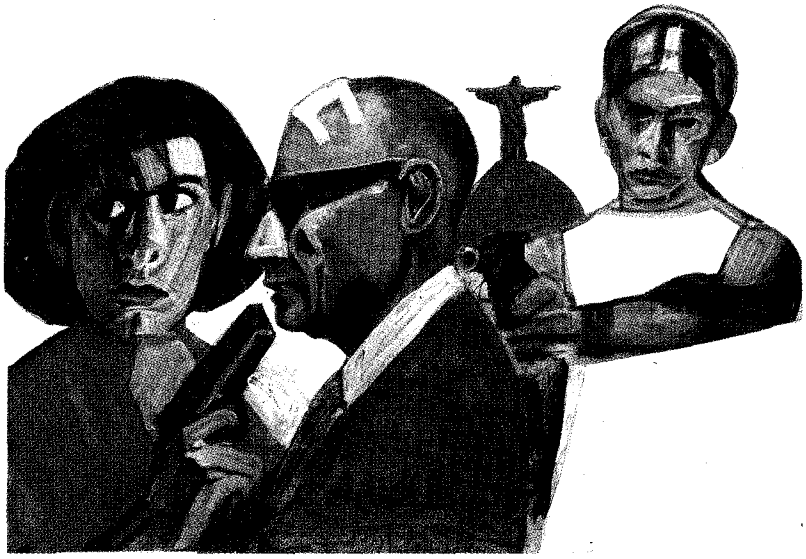
Desperate Measures—An exquisitely paced bore from Barbet Schroeder, concerning a cop (Andy Garcia) whose son needs a bone-marrow transplant from a convicted psycho killer (Michael Keaton). Schroeder, quite rightly, plays the whole setup economically, with Keaton trashing the hospital and making his escape in swift, well-edited bursts. But the script (by David Klass) is uninspired, and the acting, by both Garcia and Keaton, is too underplayed to be of much interest.—*Bruce Diones* (Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

Fallen—Apocalyptic fluff starring Denzel Washington as a cop who has sent a killer to the electric chair; it turns out that the killer was inhabited by a vengeful fallen angel whose spirit moves from person to person. Nicholas Kazan's script doesn't carry the conceit far enough: everything about the film is too cautious—including Washington, who does his usual turn as a sober and moral man, when what you want is to see him deeply rattled. Directed by Gregory Hoblit.—*Sarah Kerr* (Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Father (1966)—An air of slaphappy ruefulness rules István Szabó's story of a feisty boy named Tako, who fantasizes that his late father, a surgeon, was a swashbuckling partisan hero. When the narrative jumps from Tako's youth to his early manhood, this material doesn't pay off. Still, Szabó's examination of his hero's (and possibly his country's) overweening father worship never runs out of laughing gas—partly because of the appealing, quizzical presences of Dani Erdelyi and Andras Balint (as the younger and older Tako, respectively) and Miklos Gabor (as his father). The comic melancholy of Mahler's First Symphony is right at home on the soundtrack. Szabó and Janos Hersko wrote the script. In Hungarian.—*Michael Sragow* (Walter Reade Theatre; Feb. 6.)

Four Days in September—A film by Bruno Barreto, based on the kidnapping, in September, 1969, of the American ambassador to Brazil. With Alan Arkin, Pedro Cardoso, Claudia Abreu, and Fernanda Torres. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . ¶ Gotham Cinema; through Feb. 5.)

The Gingerbread Man—A noirish thriller that depends a lot on inclement weather and devices from other noirish thrillers. Directed by Robert Altman, from an original story by John Grisham, the movie shrouds its conventional plot with some wonderful Altmanesque ambience and, as a result, has the feel of being about more than itself. Set in Savannah, it features Kenneth Branagh as a savvy, divorced attorney who picks up the wrong woman (Embeth Davidtz) one rainy night and is so taken by her apparent vulnerability—she portrays herself as the victim of a deranged cultist father (Robert Duvall)—that he sets about destroying his own life in order to protect hers. Altman's celebrated skill at allowing his actors room gives the picture a loopy, uncontrived flow that is rare for this genre. With Robert Downey, Jr., as an alcoholic private investigator.—*D.M.* (2/2/98) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)



Fernanda Torres, Alan Arkin, and Claudia Abreu in "Four Days in September."

Good Will Hunting—Matt Damon plays a belligerent working-class genius from South Boston who's been abused in foster homes and is now being given a chance to triumph over his past; Robin Williams is the maverick shrink who helps him understand his demons, and Minnie Driver is the unsnobbish Harvard girlfriend who tries to heal him with acceptance. If it sounds treacly, it's not, thanks to a honed script (co-written by Damon and Ben Affleck, who plays Damon's best pal), subtle performances, and surprisingly warm direction by Gus Van Sant.—*D.M.* (1/19/98) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea West, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, and State.)

James and the Giant Peach (1996)—Adapted from Roald Dahl's surreal adventure story, Henry Selick's short, spiky movie is pretty adventurous itself. James (Paul Terry), a young orphan, flees his loathsome aunts (Miriam Margolyes and Joanna Lumley) inside a magic peach that takes him and a posse of insect friends to an improbably benign New York. The film opens and closes on live action, with rubbery stop-motion animation in between. Like the peach, it offers a bumpy ride, but Selick's feeling for texture—for the climates of bliss and apprehension—is so sure that you gradually come to relish the oddity of the whole enterprise.—*Anthony Lane* (Walter Reade Theatre; Feb. 7-8.)

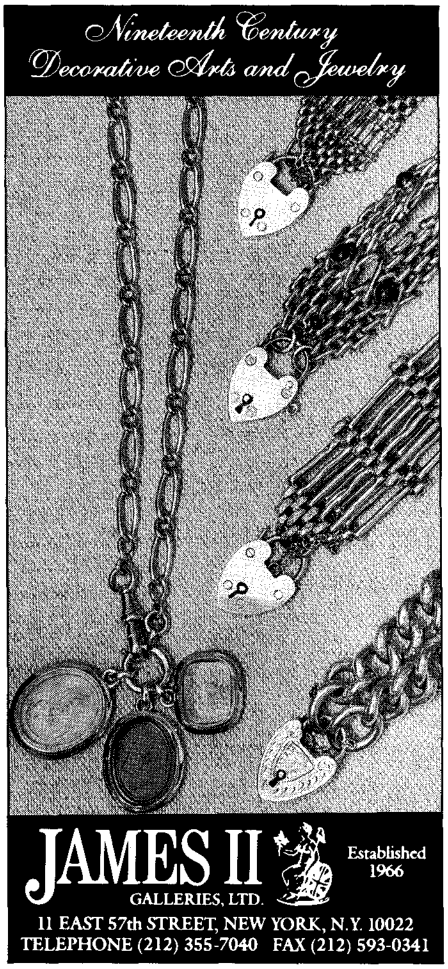
Kundun—Martin Scorsese's examination of the early life of the Dalai Lama. The film is far too long, and viewers may be frustrated by its frequently shifting tone; yet, in a way, a shifting tone is just the right treatment for a religion that emphasizes serene detachment over emotion. And, visually, this may be the director's richest feast since "Raging Bull."—*S.K.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema II, Guild, Lincoln Square, and Village East Cinemas.)

Leave Her to Heaven (1945)—Gothic psychologizing melodrama, so preposterously full-blown and straight-faced that it's a juicy entertainment. Evil, beautiful Ellen (Gene Tierney) hoards her father's ashes and has a penchant for eliminating people who clutter up her life. There are scenes to cherish, such as Ellen's long-suffering writer-husband (Cornel Wilde) remarking, "While I was watching you, exotic words drifted across the mirror of my mind as summer clouds drift across the sky." John M. Stahl directed. With Jeanne Crain, Vincent Price, and Chill Wills.—*P.K.* (A Different Light Bookstore; Feb. 8.)

Live Flesh—Half an hour into Pedro Almodóvar's new film and you're already up to your chin in blood and lust. The action starts in 1970, with a messy childbirth on a bus; twenty years later, the boy born that night, who has grown into an aimless youth called Víctor (Liberto Rabal), lands himself in trouble over a junkie (Francesca Neri) and is accused of shooting a cop; later still, we find the junkie reformed and married to the cop (Javier Bardem), who is now in a wheelchair, and Víctor coming out of prison to settle old scores. And so the farce spins on—played, as usual, with impassioned gravity, yet somehow bereft of the high spirits that used to grace the director's films. A sort of vivid despair seems to have settled over his characters, and the happy ending feels like wishful thinking. With Angela Molina and Penelope Cruz. In Spanish.—*A.L.* (1/26/98) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Love (1971)—In this poignant tale set in Budapest in 1953, Lili Darvas is delicately beautiful and vividly emotional as a dying woman hanging on in the hope of once more seeing her son (Ivan Darvas). Her beleaguered daughter-in-law (Mari Töröcsik) has concocted letters describing his wild adventures while making a film in New York; actually (of course), he's a political prisoner. The director, Károly Makk, fails to set a satisfying rhythm, but his work with the actors releases the ironies of the material. Töröcsik's performance is as extraordinary as the older woman's—her note of weary fervor does more to keep the picture moving than Makk's haunting succession of fractured fantasies and flashbacks. The movie is about courage and compassion: the wife's devotion to her helpless mother-in-law prepares her to reconnect with her broken husband. Peter Bacso adapted the script from Tibor Dery's novel. In Hungarian.—*M.S.* (Walter Reade Theatre; Feb. 5 and Feb. 7-8.)

The Replacement Killers—If Jackie Chan is the goofy Everyman of Hong Kong action movies, Chow Yun-Fat is the feline heartthrob—a Clint Eastwood-type avenger with the flair of a Cary Grant. In his American début, Chow plays a hit man assigned by a Chinese godfather to kill an American cop's little boy. He's reluctant to harm a child, so, with the help of a tough-with-a-heart-of-gold faker of passports (Mira Sorvino, wearing little more than



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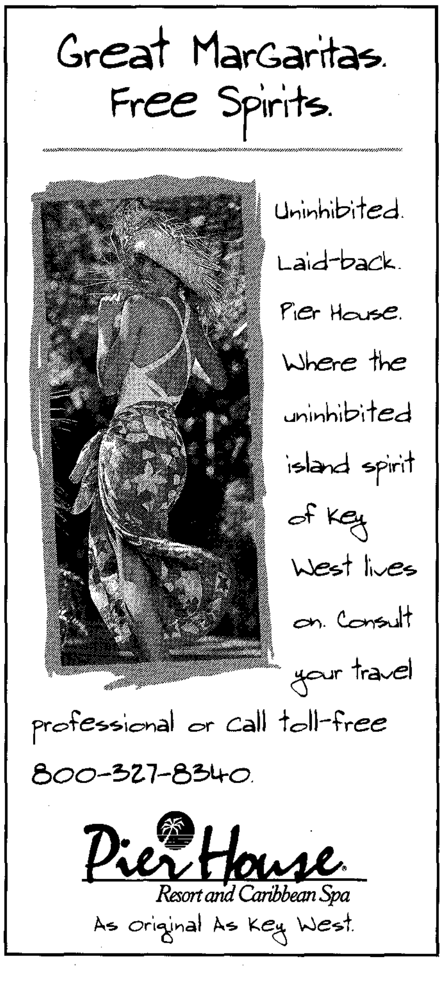

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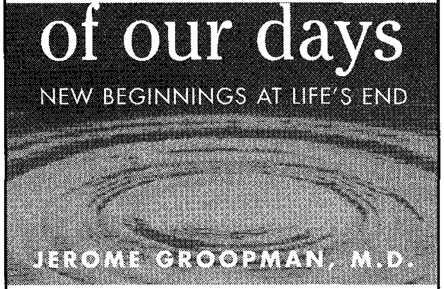
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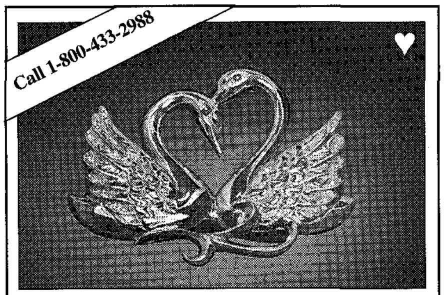

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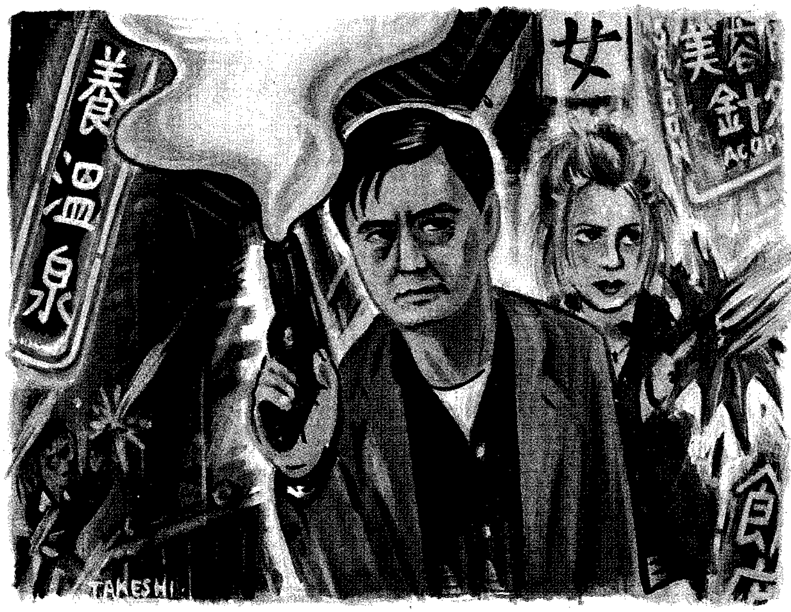


Opening Feb. 6, Chow Yun-Fat and Mira Sorvino in "The Replacement Killers."

TAKESHI TADATSU

lingerie), he goes on the lam. Chow is one of the most photogenic men on earth, and the director, Antoine Fuqua, works hard to match the operatic doominess of his Hong Kong vehicles. But in the more anonymous American setting, and without the mad conviction of a director like John Woo, all the choreographed murder feels dull, poorly paced, and, come to think of it, pretty demented.—*S.K.* (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII; starting Feb. 6.)

Spice World—And you thought the art movie was dead. This one is a showcase for the Spice Girls—Scary, Sporty, Ginger, Baby, and Posh—and their songs. Opinions vary as to precisely how long it took to devise the plot; generous estimates put it at fifteen minutes. The Girls buzz around London in a big bus, and there are occasional dream sequences and innumerable meetings with celebrities, few of whom will be recognized by American audiences. The director is Bob Spiers, though it's hard to judge whether he actually turned up on the set. High marks, as ever, to the Spice Girls themselves for sheer nerve, and especially to Posh, who, when she opens her mouth, reveals herself to be about as posh as the Artful Dodger.—*A.L.* (1/26/98) (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Swept from the Sea—In turn-of-the-century Cornwall, a lonely maid (Rachel Weisz) falls in love with a shipwreck survivor (Vincent Perez), a Ukrainian who washes ashore in her harsh, bigoted village. The film was inspired by the Joseph Conrad short story "Amy Foster," but for a celebration of passion over prejudice it's weirdly low on passion. At times you wonder: Did this get made because the story rights were a bargain? With Ian McKellen as an overly rational doctor and Kathy Bates, having some accent trouble, as a paraplegic spinster. Directed by Beeban Kidron.—*S.K.* (64th and 2nd and Village East Cinemas.)

Titanic—At well over three hours, James Cameron's grand new picture has plenty of romance to get through before it breaks the vessel in half. Leonardo DiCaprio plays the freewheeling Jack, who wins a steerage ticket and finds himself falling for the wealthy Rose (Kate Winslet), to the disapproval of her mother (Frances Fisher) and her brute of a fiancé (Billy Zane). The social animus of the story, like its imaginative majesty, is Dickensian; this all feels like two hundred million dollars well spent.—*A.L.* (12/15/97) (Astor Plaza, Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

Touch of Evil (1958)—As the madam of a Mexican bordello, Marlene Dietrich (done up in Gypsy makeup) greets the grotesquely oversized, padded, false-nosed Orson Welles with a glorious understatement—"You're a mess, honey. You've been eating too much candy." Welles's first American production in a decade, this marvellously garish thriller has something, but not very much, to do with drugs and police corruption in a border town. What it really has to do with is love of the film medium, and if Welles can't resist the candy of shadows and angles and baroque decor, he turns it into stronger fare than most directors' solemn meat and potatoes. It's a terrific entertainment. The cast, assembled as perversely as in a nightmare, includes Charlton Heston, Joseph Cotten, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Mercedes McCambridge, Janet Leigh, and Dennis Weaver.—*P.K.* (Film Forum 2; Feb. 6-8.)

Wag the Dog—Barry Levinson's comedy about the politics of spin control, from a screenplay by David Mamet and Hilary Henkin. The premise involves a Presidential incumbent caught in a sex scandal less than two weeks before Election Day. Robert De Niro plays a Machiavellian spinmeister who devises a fake war and hires a Hollywood producer (Dustin Hoffman) to orchestrate it. The movie is very clever, but its tone of gleeful sendup never takes you beyond what you already know.—*D.M.* (1/5/98) (Cinema I, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

ALSO PLAYING

AFTERGLOW (reviewed in our issue of 1/19/98): Regency.... **AMISTAD:** Lincoln Square and, State.... **BOOGIE NIGHTS** (10/13/97): Eastside Playhouse.... **DECEIVER:** Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea West, Embassy 2, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Park & 86th Street Cinemas.... **DECONSTRUCTING HARRY:** Cinema 3rd Avenue, East 85th Street, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas.... **DEEP RISING:** 84th Street Sixplex, 86th Street East Cinemas, Embassy 1, 19th Street East 6, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas.... **DEVIL'S ADVOCATE:** Worldwide Cinemas.... **EVE'S BAYOU:** Worldwide Cinemas.... **FALLEN ANGELS:** Film Forum.... **THE FULL MONTY:** The Screening Room and Sutton.... **FULL SPEED:** Quad Cinema.... **GREAT EXPECTATIONS:** Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Ziegfeld. . . . **HALF BAKED:** Criterion Center, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **HARD RAIN:** 84th Street Sixplex and 34th Street Showplace. . . . **THE HOUSE OF YES:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE ICE STORM** (9/29/97): Quad Cinema. . . . **I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE JACKAL:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **JACKIE BROWN** (1/12/98): Embassy 3, Metro Cinema, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **KILLING TIME:** 86th Street East Twin. . . . **L.A. CONFIDENTIAL** (9/22/97): Art Greenwich Twin, Lincoln Square, and New York Twin. . . . **MA VIE EN ROSE:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **MIDNIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF GOOD AND EVIL** (12/6/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **MOUSEHUNT:** 64th and 2nd. . . . **NO ORDINARY LOVE:** Village East Cinemas. . . . **OSCAR AND LUCINDA** (1/12/98): 62nd & Broadway, 72nd Street East, and Waverly. . . . **PHANTOMS:** Chelsea Cinema, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, 86th Street East Twin, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **SCREAM 2:** State. . . . **THE SWEET HEREAFTER** (11/24/97): Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **TOMORROW NEVER DIES:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, and Metro Cinema. . . . **VILLAGE OF DREAMS:** Cinema Village. . . . **THE WINGS OF THE DOVE** (11/10/97): 59th Street East Cinema. . . . **THE WINTER GUEST** (1/5/98): Paris. . . . **ZERO EFFECT:** Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy 1, 2, and 3, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Feb. 4: "This Gun for Hire" (1942, Frank Tuttle) and "The Blue Dahlia" (1948, George Marshall). . . . Feb. 5: "Phantom Lady" (1944, Robert Siodmak) and "The Black Angel" (1946, Roy William Neill). . . . Feb. 6-8: "Touch of Evil" (†) and "Cape Fear" (1962, J. Lee Thompson). . . . Feb. 9: "Speedway" (1929, Harry Beaumont) and "Slide, Kelly, Slide" (1927, Edward Sedgwick), both with William Haines. . . . Feb. 10: "The Glass Key" (1942, Stuart Heisler) and "Ministry of Fear" (1944, Fritz Lang).

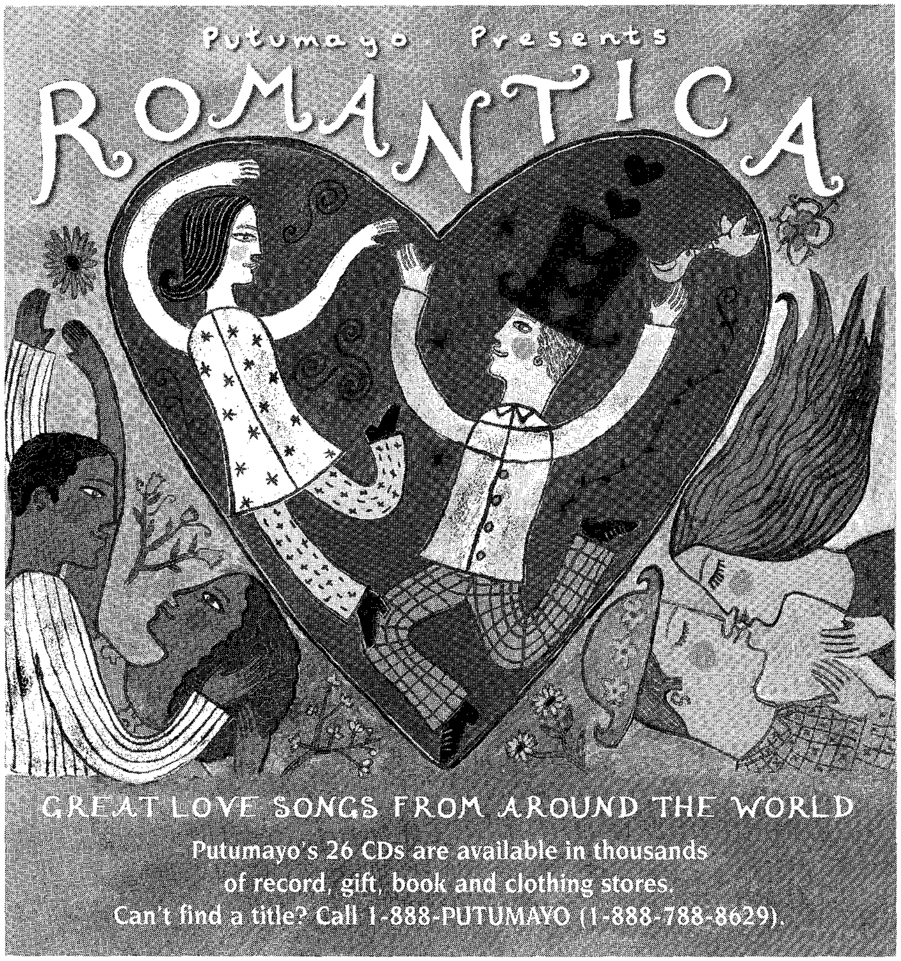
Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Feb. 5 at 2:30: "The Poor Little Rich Girl" (1917, Maurice Tourneur; silent) and "The Little Princess" (1917, Marshall Neilan; silent). . . . Feb. 5 at 6: "The Cheat" (1915, Cecil B. De Mille; silent) and "Tillie Wakes Up" (1917, Harry Davenport; silent). . . . Feb. 5 at 6:30 and Feb. 6 at 3: "Mind the Gap" (1997, Elfi Mikesch). . . . Feb. 6 at 2:30: "Lightnin' " (1925, John Ford; silent). . . . Feb. 6 at 6: "Back Pay" (1922, Frank Borzage; silent) and "The Flapper" (1920, Alan Crosland; silent). . . . Feb. 6 at 6:30 and 8: Two programs in a series about the history of 8-mm. films and videos in the United States. . . . Feb. 6 at 8:15: "Wild and Woolly" (1917, John Emerson; silent) and "American Aristocracy" (1916, Lloyd Ingraham; silent). . . . Feb. 7 at noon: "Empire" (1965, Andy Warhol and John Palmer). . . . Feb. 7 at 2: "The Ten Commandments" (1923, De Mille; silent). . . . Feb. 7 at 5: "When a Man Loves" (1927, Crosland; silent). . . . Feb. 8 at 2: "A Woman of Affairs" (1929, Clarence Brown). . . . Feb. 8 at 2:30: "Dreams That Money Can Buy" (1947, Hans Richter). . . . Feb. 8 at 5: "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" (1921, Rex Ingram; silent). . . . Feb. 9 at 2:30: "Arsène Lupin" (†). . . . Feb. 9 at 6: "Lazybones" (1925, Borzage; silent). . . . Feb. 9 at 6:30: "Nobody's Business" (1996), directed by Alan Berliner, who will be present. . . . Feb. 10 at 2:30: "Possessed" (1931, Brown). . . . Feb. 10 at 6: "Blood and Sand" (1922, Fred Niblo; silent).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A program of Hungarian films; in Hungarian, with English subtitles. Feb. 4 at 2 and 6:15: "Current" (1963, István Gaál). . . . Feb. 4 at 4:10 and 8:15: "Skylark" (1963, László Ranody). . . . Feb. 5 at 2, Feb. 7 at 5:35, and Feb. 8 at 4: "Love" (†). . . . Feb. 5 at 4 and Feb. 8 at 6: "The Falcons" (1969, Gaál). . . . Feb. 6 at 2 and 6:15: "Father" (†). . . . Feb. 6 at 4 and 8:10: "The Red and the White" (1967, Miklós Jancsó). . . . Feb. 7 at 4 and 9:30: "The Lady from Constantinople" (1969, Judit Elek). . . . Feb. 7 at 7:30 and Feb. 8 at 7:45: "Cold Days" (1966, András Kovács). . . . Feb. 10 at 2 and 6:15: "Red Psalm" (1971, Jancsó). . . . Feb. 10 at 4 and 8: "Sinbad" (1971, Zoltan Huszarik). . . . ¶ Weekend showings for children. Feb. 7-8 at 2: "James and the Giant Peach" (†).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A program of films directed by Douglas Sirk. Feb. 7 at 2: "The First Legion" (1950). . . . Feb. 8 at 2: "Magnificent Obsession" (1954). . . . Feb. 8 at 4:30: "Sleep, My Love" (1947).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Feb. 8 at 7, the feature will be "Leave Her to Heaven" (†).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Feb. 10 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Ponette" (1996, Jacques Doillon; in French).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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

INK

What the Clinton scandal looks like from inside the fishbowl.

The phone rings again. It's Peter Baker from the Washington *Post*. He knows I have copies of the most coveted tapes since Watergate. My mom, Lucianne Goldberg, and I are the only two people besides Linda Tripp who have heard them. Baker is charging my defenses for the third time in an hour.

"Jonah, you've got friends, right?"

"Yes," I answer, not knowing whether he means friends or "friends."

"Good. O.K. And if you don't, I have friends, so that's not really important. Anyway, O.K. Let's see. You don't want to give the tapes to a journalist, right?"

"Yes, that's right," I say.

"O.K., O.K., O.K. How about you give them to a 'friend,' who then gives them to me, and that way you can swear you never gave the tapes to a journalist?"

"Sorry, I can't do that."

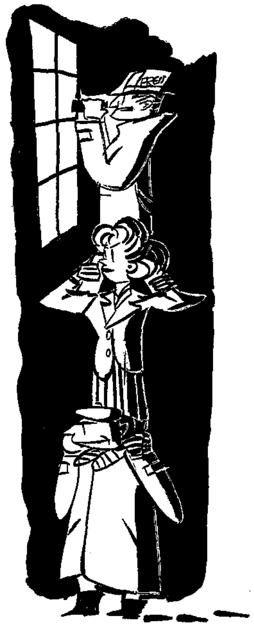
"O.K. Let me think some more."

Ten minutes later: "O.K., O.K. Say you went out to pick up your dry cleaning. And you happened to leave the door open. And then someone sort of—I dunno—sneaked in. And happened to hit 'play' on your stereo. What about that?"

Then, there was the guy from *Salon*. He was following a lead he picked up in the international press. Why did Netanyahu get his message off untrammelled, he wanted to know, while Arafat got buried in an avalanche of tapes and allegations? He asked, "Is your mother connected with any right-wing or militant Jewish groups?"

The bunkerization of my ancestral rent-stabilized apartment on the Upper West Side began on Wednesday, January 21st. F.B.I. agents and camera crews had started circling our building that morning, so I flew up from Washington. When I arrived, Danny Rivera, our fiercely loyal building superintendent, was already on the case, keeping the hordes at a safe distance.

Right away, Diane Sawyer called. She knows my mom slightly, but she's got a job to do. One of her great assets is her hypnotic voice. "Hi, Looocy," she said. "Isn't this the most amaaazing story. . . ." They chatted for ten minutes or so, like two old finishing-school chums. Finally, the pitch. "Hey, Lucy," Sawyer said. "I have the greatest idea. Why don't I just run downstairs, get in a cab, zip over there, and listen to the tapes for, say, fifteen minutes or so. Just to say I heard them. That way, I can go on the air and say it's true that these tapes are 'shocking.' "



"You know, Diane, I think that would be fine," Mom answered, harmonizing her voice with Diane's. She could almost hear Sawyer putting on her coat. "But there's just one thing you're going to have to do."

"Oh? What's that?"

"You're going to have to service my super."

Diane was quick: "Are you sure a warm handshake won't do the trick?"

Tom Brokaw and Jimmy Breslin both had notes delivered on Thursday night. Brokaw, who was clearly embarrassed to be asking my mom questions about oral sex, sent a typed letter graciously asking if we could keep the lines of communication open. Breslin scrawled a madman's screed addressed "Dear Agent" which joked, "If you don't call me, I'll bad-mouth you all over town." Late that night, he called and begged Mom for an interview "from one old gangster to another."

Then, there were the obligatory death threats, picket threats, bomb threats, and so on. One woman left a slurred message on our machine that my mom was going to get her throat cut because she's a whore. There were calls of congratulation, too. And, of course, there were the calls from Danny the super. He kept asking when Diane Sawyer was coming over.

Diane Sawyer called again. She and her producer, Shelley Ross, made one last try. They explained that they just wanted to hear a little bit of the tapes, since they would be coming out eventually anyway. As Shelley cajoled, Diane smoothly interjected, cooing, "Looocy, I'm ready for your super now."

On Thursday I headed back to Washington to deliver the tapes to the Office of the Independent Counsel. When I came out of the building, the press was on top of me. The only question I heard was "Does your mom know Monica Lewinsky's mom?"

On Sunday, Danny the super was finally gratified, sort of. Diane Sawyer and Shelley came to lunch at our apartment. Danny had formulated a plan to get everyone out of the building without being spotted by the media. It was an important mission. My mother, Diane, Shelley, and my brother Josh scurried through the labyrinthine tunnels in the basement and somehow emerged in a shoe store, at Broadway and Eighty-fourth Street. Seeing Sawyer and company, the store manager exclaimed, "Which one is Lucianne?"

Sawyer's network van was just yards away. Suddenly, Shelley cried, "Oh, my God!" The others wheeled around to see which hack was lying in wait for them. Or was it the F.B.I.? "Look at those boots! I must have them," Shelley said.

The calls are still coming. When Phil Kuntz from the *Wall Street Journal* called, he used an age-old interrogation tactic. "Hey, Jonah," he said. "I know you're busy. I don't need much, I've got the story nailed. I just need to flesh out one little thing."

"O.K.," I said.

"Great. O.K., it's a little thing. What's on the tapes?" —JONAH GOLDBERG

FUNNY COINCIDENCE DEPT.

Robert Duvall's movie date with the Commander-in-Chief

SUMMING up the eerie atmosphere in Washington at the conclusion of Week One of Monica Lewinsky's cavort through history, the *Times* noted that the movie screened at the White House that Saturday night—"The Apostle," written and directed by and starring Robert Duvall—"dealt with the subject of adultery." The reductive characterization, however, was imprecise—no more apposite than the same label applied to "Casablanca." Specifically, "The Apostle"—a story about a Holy Roller preacher which, to its credit, manages to avoid preachiness or ironic cynicism—deals with the subjects of faith and salvation. A man who feels genuinely close to God nevertheless commits a violent crime; cloaking himself in a new identity, he makes a sincere and humble effort to do right, but in the end he doesn't get away with anything. "The Apostle" is both more timeless and vastly less timely than, say, "Wag the Dog." (President, in closing weeks of reëlection campaign, succumbs to zipper problem; spin doctor, to divert attention, simulates war with Albania.)

Three days after attending the White House screening, Duvall sat in a dressing room at the Ed Sullivan Theatre—he was about to tape an appearance on the "Late Show with David Letterman"—and talked about his evening there. The Clintons had invited around eighty people for dinner and the movie, and, other than an observation by the First Lady in her welcoming remarks to the effect that it had been "*such* an uneventful week at the White House," nobody openly discussed the President's travails. "But it wasn't awkward," Duvall said. "It was very cordial. I'd gone to the White House a year ago, around Christmastime, when I went to the Kennedy Center to present an award to Johnny Cash. And I was there way back, with President Reagan, for a tennis tournament. This time was completely different from either of those. It was relaxed, informal. I talked a little bit about the movie and was going to take a seat near the back, but somebody motioned for me to sit in the front row"—to the left of Frank Biondi, the chief executive of Universal Studios; the Clintons were seated to Biondi's right. "I didn't look over at them while the film was running. They were kind of sunk back in their chairs, but someone told me they were holding hands and moving their feet in rhythm with the music. The President said afterward that he really responded to the music; he's been to so many of these churches in the South. I'm told some of his greatest speeches are to black congregations. Over all, I'd say the people at the White House got it—the laughter was spontaneous, and everybody seemed upbeat and appreciative."

The Clintons attended Methodist church services in Washington the day after the screening. Duvall—who, by the way, confessed that he had voted Republican most of his life but did vote twice for Clinton, "for reasons I won't go into"—spent that morning on his farm in Virginia. "No, I don't go to church much," he said. "I have my own way of worship. But I went to church an awful lot while I was doing research to make this film. Mostly black Baptist churches, more than a hundred. In Harlem, I went to six one Sunday. How did I hit that many? Just go, go, go. In and out, in and out, in and out." —MARK SINGER

BOYS WILL BE BOYS

An evolutionary explanation for Presidents behaving badly.

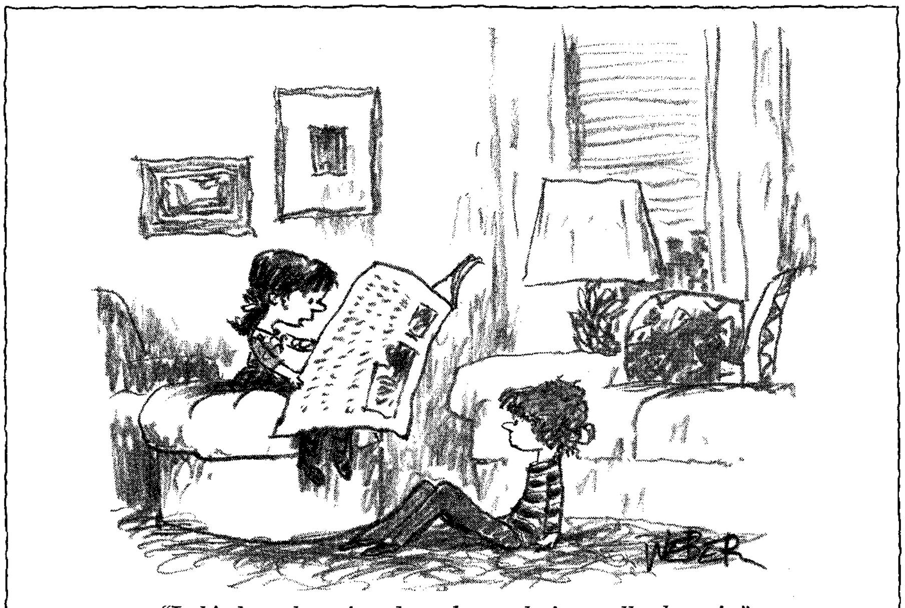
WHY do so many famous men gamble their reputations, their careers, and their marriages on reckless sexual encounters? It's hard to believe the James Bond theory—that men crave the esteem society bestows on the dashing stud. Men try to conceal their liaisons, not advertise them, and when they fail their reward is ridicule from Leno and Letterman, not the respect of a nation.

Perhaps the political process selects rapscallions who thrill at defying the conventions that govern the rest of us. Or perhaps, as Henry Kissinger said, power is the great aphrodisiac. But the simplest explanation may be that our leaders and celebrities show ordinary male appetites in extraordinary circumstances.

Most human drives have ancient Darwinian rationales. Fear of heights kept our ancestors from plunging off cliffs; a taste for sweets kept their bodies fuelled. Sexual desire is no different. A prehistoric man who slept with fifty women could have sired fifty children, and would have been more likely to have descendants who inherited his tastes. A woman who slept with fifty men would have had no more descendants than a woman who slept with one. Thus, men should seek quantity in sexual partners; women, quality—a source of protection, resources, and good genes for their children.

Indeed, in all societies known to ethnography it is the males who seduce, proposition, hire prostitutes, and accumulate spouses. In our society, most young men tell researchers that they would like eight sexual partners in the next two years; most women say that they would like one. On several college campuses, researchers have hired attractive assistants to approach students of the opposite sex and proposition them out of the blue. What proportion says yes? Of the women, zero per cent; of the men, seventy-five per cent. (Many of the remaining twenty-five per cent ask for a rain check.)

But if politicians and celebrities have standard-issue male libidos why do they seem to have so much more trouble controlling them than the average Joe? One reason is that for the average Joe the issue is moot: he won't find eight women willing to sleep with him in the next two years, and he never has to worry about



"I think oral sex is when they only just talk about it."

attractive women propositioning him out of the blue. Only in special circumstances are sexual partners freely available, and only then will male desire yield ridiculous numbers. Imperial despots, who could get anything they wanted, kept harems of hundreds of women. Gay men, who don't have to compromise their desires with women's more selective tastes, sometimes find hundreds or thousands of partners. So can a contemporary heterosexual man if he is sufficiently rich, handsome, or powerful. That's why homely rock stars and octogenarian oil barons can marry supermodels, and why powerful male politicians may face temptations that most of their constituents do not.

There may be another reason that political leaders are different. Incredible as it may seem, the male brain houses more than a sex drive. The human mind is a committee. The libido must contend with a mind's eye that simulates consequences, an oddsmaker that reckons their likelihood, and a conscience that represents the interests of other people. Usually, the libido gets shouted down before it can push the buttons of behavior, and if men commit adultery it is only in their hearts. But in some men the internal debate may have a different outcome. Anyone who has what it takes to rise to the top of a cutthroat profession—say, getting elected President—is likely to be a risktaker, a strategist, and a moral utilitarian who reasons that if no one finds out no harm has been done. So are leaders and celebrities more concupiscent than the average man? Fortunately for the average man, perhaps, he will never be in a position to find out.

—STEVEN PINKER

THE SPORTING LIFE

Will Olympic snowboarders get points for preening at Nagano?

FOR snowboarders, being in the Olympics this year is kind of a trade-off: personal glory at the risk of formalization of their nonsport sport. "The Olympics thing is kind of weird" is how Todd Richards put it. Richards is the reigning male god of snowboarding, and when he said this he was in between runs at a big competition, but he was still like, talk, sure, it's cool: "This has always been a rad sport to me. But with the teams and stuff—I mean, I'm never going to call it 'training.' To me, the word 'training' is, like, drinking riboflavin shakes and jogging. The thing is, it's a soul sport."

This is the attitude of snowboarders as they prepare to go live from Nagano on February 7th. It is also the attitude that sets them apart from athletes in the other two new Olympic winter sports, curling and women's ice hockey, which are, well, not quite so rad. Style will set them apart, too. The best-dressed male snowboarders, for instance, use boards decorated like the covers of old Yes albums and dress like members of Speed Racer's pit crew. The best-dressed women—some of them are dead ringers for nineteen-seventies Barbies, with pink boards, flowery belts, and groovy bell-bottoms—look like the members of Asian chick bands: a little sport, a little street, with some space-age fabrics and a hint of androgyny mixed in.

And don't think fashion is peripheral to snowboarding. Although the sport was whisked into the Olympics as a "discipline" of skiing, the thing it is actually a discipline of is showing off. Snowboarding is a sport where people can become world-famous not because they've done well in a race but because they've looked great in some of the zillions of snowboarder videos that fans devour. At competitions, photographers take the place of trainers; it's as if a good run that occurs in a forest where no one sees it is a run that doesn't really occur at all.

If you were up on Mt. Hood, in Oregon, recently, you would have seen lots of Olympic hopefuls showing off. One afternoon, a pack of would-be Olympians were riding the fifty-foot-wide, three-hundred-foot-long, gutter-shaped piece of ice known as "the pipe": people like Aleksi Litovaara, the Finnish boarder; Jenny Jonsson, from Sweden; and Satu Jarvela, who won the half-pipe competition at last year's U.S. Snowboarding Open. In the sun on the edge of the ice, a boom box was blasting Led Zeppelin.

Michele Taggart, a contender for the U.S. team (which isn't chosen until the last minute), was riding a metallic-blue board. She was dressed in a white T-shirt, a brown sweater, and pinkish snow pants, her dirty-blond hair in a ponytail; she was doing a Northwestern-art-student look, a no-worries thing. She was practicing moves that looked impossible, that were huge and gymnastic and happening twenty-five feet up in the air—things like her McTwist, a flip/twist/midair somersault that will be a big move for half-pipers in Nagano, even if, as Taggart was quick to point out, it is no big deal.

On a break, she described a good run. She was out of breath, and her face shone in the sun bouncing off the white glacier. "You're on the top," she said, her hands translating. "You're hanging out with your buddies. You're cracking jokes. You maybe hear somebody say, 'Go big!,' and then you drop in the pipe thinking, O.K.! I'm going big! Then you really push it into the wall, so that you get up big in the air. And then you get that floaty feeling. For me, that's the moment. That's what it's all about. You're just feeling kind of like forever. That's the air.... Everything's just quiet."

—Robert Sullivan

LEGAL PAD

White lies, black lies, and more shades of gray than you thought possible.

With perjury, the switch is either on or off. At least at the federal level, this is not an offense that comes in degrees, the way homicide does. The law makes no distinction between, say, satanic webs of pernicious falsehoods calculated to cover up crimes against humanity and, say, feeble fibs aimed at wiggling out of some horribly embarrassing and essentially victimless but legal piece of human stupidity.

The troubles now engulfing our President—who is, preliminary research indicates, historically unique in having his very own thirty-plus-million-dollar federal police agency wholly dedicated to using the plenipotentiary powers of a modern state to ferret out and publicize the most mortifying details of his sex life—suggest that it may be time for some adjustments. This wasn't on Clinton's State of the Union laundry list, but perhaps perjury could use some parsing, to wit:

Perjury in the first degree: this would be lying under oath to obfuscate some truly serious crime, such as treason, murder, or aggravated rape, when for some reason it's impossible to convict the culprit for the "real" crime. The model case (without getting into a big hassle about the justice of it all) would be that of Alger Hiss, whose perjury conviction was a surrogate for one of espionage. Recommended penalty: ten to fifteen years.

Second degree: lying under oath to cover up something that isn't quite so serious but is still harmful in some concrete way, such as beating someone up and/or stealing his money. Penalty: five years. (This, as it happens, is the maximum for perjury in federal law.)

Third degree: lying under oath to obtain a conviction against someone whom the liar knows or strongly suspects to be innocent. Penalty: half of whatever the innocent person got or would have got.

Fourth degree: lying under oath to put away someone who's totally, obviously, screamingly guilty as charged. Penalty: suspension without pay and banishment from the Policemen's Ball.

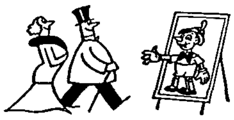
Fifth degree: lying under oath in a pathetic, lame, probably hopeless effort to avoid responsibility for some sexual escapade. (As a surprisingly large segment of the public seems to understand, lying about illicit sex is inseparable from the act itself, adds little or nothing to its depravity, and need not reflect a general propensity toward mendacity.) Penalty: embarrassment, humiliation, ridicule.

Sixth degree: some editor swearing on a stack of Bibles to some writer that the deadline for his piece is tomorrow, when actually it's the day after tomorrow. Penalty: it might not work.

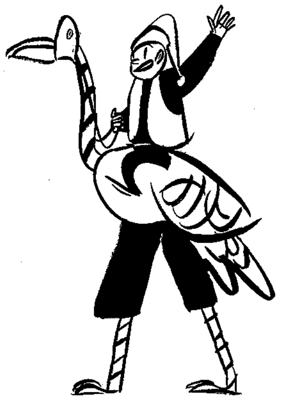
—Hendrik Hertzberg

THE CREATIVE LIFE

"The Lion King" plays Vegas without ever leaving New York.



Ever since "The Lion King" opened on Broadway, late last year, much praise has been bestowed upon what the director, Julie Taymor, calls the "double event" of her animal costumes—by which she means that the viewer, while looking at a giraffe, also sees a man with stilts attached to all four limbs and with a tall giraffe-head device perched on his brow. This blending of human and animal has been rapturously received: a *Times* editorial noted that "the special genius of Ms. Taymor's version of 'The Lion King' is the way it unmasks—and de-cloys—the anthropomorphism of Disney's animated animal films," while *The Weekly Standard* called her production "a feat of technique so profound that it will redefine the American theater."



But, in what appears to be one of those cases of parallel evolution which so fascinate biologists, anthropomorphic unmasking was going on at the MGM Grand Adventures Theme Park in Las Vegas long before Taymor became the most celebrated puppeteer since Gepetto. For the past two years, visitors to the park over the Christmas holidays have been treated to the sight of stilt-walkers in costumes designed to give the impression of an elf perched on the back of a big white plush bird. The elf's fake legs dangle over the bird's wings, while the bird's long neck and head are harnessed by a pair of reins. The result, to the "Lion King"-conscious viewer, looks like Taymor Lite with Nutrasweet.

According to MGM Grand's director of entertainment, Chris Coaley, the bird was conceived after he saw some stilt-walkers from Nova Scotia about two years ago. "There were some interactive creatures that were very entertaining to the people on the streets," he recalled. "So I got one of our stilt-walker guys, David DeDera, to come up with something for Christmas. We talked about reindeer on stilts, things like that. And he was like, 'I think I can create a Christmas bird.' "

Unlike Taymor's dusty, veldt-ready creations, the MGM Grand bird does not aspire to realism. "We played around with the twelve days of Christmas, with the geese and the hens," Coaley said. "We took a piece of every bird that was in that song and created our own bird, basically." When asked whether he, like Julie Taymor, was trying to create a "double event," Coaley replied, "Well, when you're on the streets in the theme park you need something tall that can take some focus."

The Christmas-bird costumes won't be seen again until December, but their popularity has Coaley planning other, more ambitious stilt creatures. "We'll do a very different-looking kind of thing for our Temporary Insanity Spring Break event," he explained. Among the ideas on DeDera's drawing board is, as it happens, a giraffe. "I was supposed to do it for last spring, and then the budget didn't allow for it," DeDera said. "And then I saw 'The Lion King' in *Time*. It felt good to have had the same idea that they had on Broadway. It was 'Whoa, that's cool. I guess my ideas are all right.' "

—Rebecca Mead

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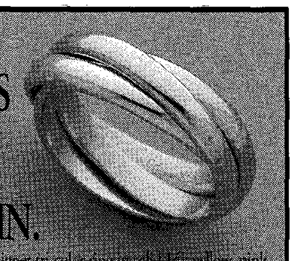

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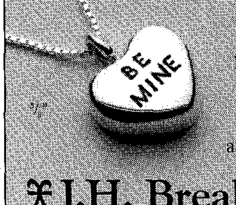

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

AN AMERICAN MARRIAGE

How to explain Bill and Hillary Clinton?

BY JOE KLEIN

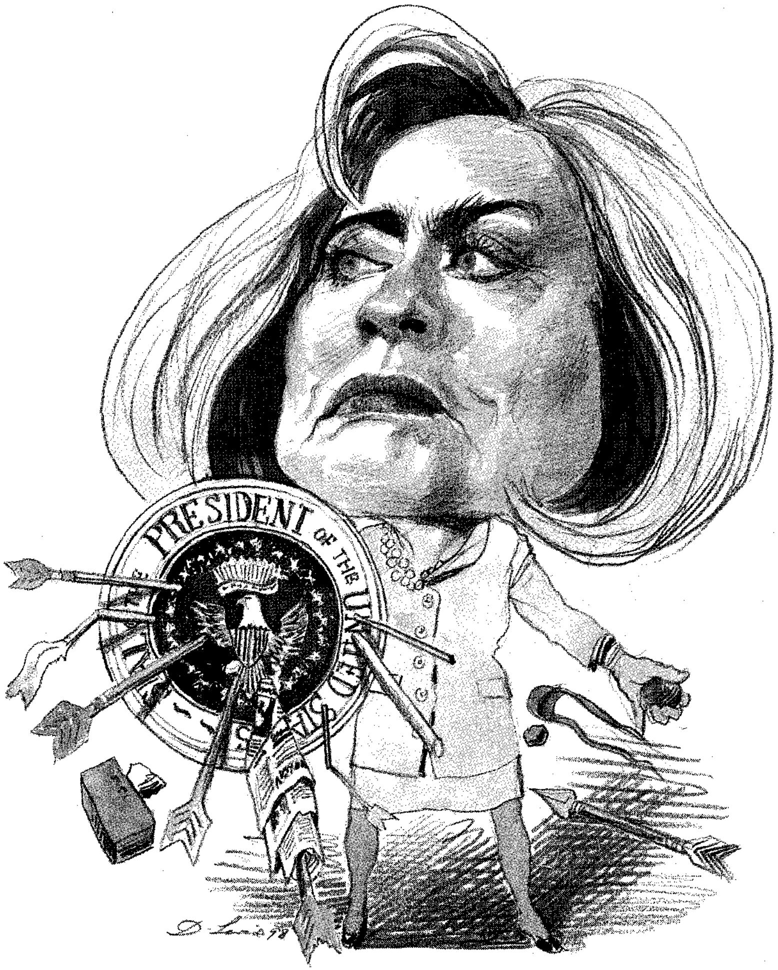
IN early December of 1997, Diane Blair, who is one of Hillary Rodham Clinton's oldest and closest friends, visited the First Lady in her White House study. During a rambling conversation, the two women came to the subject of the global-warming treaty then being negotiated in Japan. Blair observed that "even intelligent people have trouble understanding what this is all about," and the First Lady agreed. The President then dropped in, joined the conversation, and soon, much to Blair's surprise, was enmeshed in a heated argument with his wife. "They were arguing about whether it does any good to do the right thing on a controversial issue if no one has a clue you're doing it," Blair recalled. "It was a high-pitched argument. It would not have seemed, to most people, a picture of loveliness. They were really, really angry with each other. And then, suddenly, the President took her in his arms and began kissing her all over her face and he said, 'God, what would I do without you?' I felt kind of embarrassed being there—I wanted to leave the room. But I just don't think you can fake that sort of thing."

There are several plausible ways to react to this story. One is: Oh, yuck. Another is: Oh, come on. A cynic might say that Blair is an old Clinton friend—the wife of Jim Blair, the Tyson Foods lawyer who helped Mrs. Clinton with her controversial commodities trading—cleverly perpetuating the party line that this is a solid, loving marriage: a real relationship, not a political arrangement. There is also a third possible reaction: Blair's story conforms to the recollections of a great many people who know the Clintons well, even of some who left their employ feeling betrayed and disheartened. (And of some independent observers, too: early in the 1992 Presidential campaign, I accidentally witnessed the Clintons in a serious snuggle on a dark pathway after a speech in Columbia, South Carolina.)

The quality and texture of the Clinton marriage has always been the great unanswered question of this Presidency. Unlike most inquiries into the private lives of politicians, this one seems legitimate—because of the First Lady's deep and obvious involvement in the formulation of public policy (and, less so, because of the President's apparent weakness for involvements of other sorts). Much of the speculation has been vapid, tabloidy stuff: if he strays so egregiously and she sticks around, this must be a cold, political partnership. Other strands of speculation are woven into psychobabble about "enablers" and "addicts" and "denial." But even the best marriages are tangled and contradictory affairs, their psychological terrain unknowable to all but the immediate participants. "The only people who count in any marriage are the two that are in it," the First Lady said on NBC's "Today" program last week, an echo of comments she first made on "60 Minutes" in the midst of the Gennifer Flowers episode. "We know everything there is to know about each other, and we understand and accept and love each other."

When it comes to Clinton-marriage scenarios, the wisest course may be to remain indiscriminately credulous: He is chronically unfaithful. They fight like harpies. They are political partners. They are best friends. They love each other madly. None of these are mutually exclusive. The recent photograph of them dancing, in bathing suits, on the beach in St. Thomas, in the Virgin Islands, is a metaphor of sorts: no doubt they were aware of the cameras—the White House's later protests about the invasion of privacy are laughable—and they probably knew that the image might serve as a mild antidote to the embarrassments that would accompany the Paula Jones lawsuit. But it is also not impossible—and not at all contradictory—that the Clintons were besotted with each other at that moment. The President's problem has never been a deficiency of affection. And, as for the First Lady, a friend says, "I think she's goofy about him."

Which is not to say that this isn't a stupefyingly weird relationship. There are public aspects of it that mystify. Why, for example, does Hillary Clinton always look so radiant in the midst of a sex scandal? The canary-yellow suit she wore at her husband's third semi-official White House denial ceremony (the vehement one, last Monday) was perfectly crisp and cheery; her face was composed and untroubled; even her hair style seemed less temporary than usual. Staff members remember a similar moment in the 1992 campaign, when the Gennifer Flowers and draft scandals broke during the New Hampshire primary. "We were all completely depressed and totally scruffy, the hotel where we were staying was a mess," Mandy Grunwald, a media adviser in that campaign, recalls, "and she walks in one morning just dressed to the nines. It was a dark pants suit with brass buttons, I think. She had her makeup on, her hair done meticulously. She had done all this intentionally, to send us a message: 'Stop moping. We are going to be professionals. The worse you feel, the better you should look.' It was her way of getting us going again."


PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
D Levine 98

How does Hillary defend her husband with such a straight face? "She focusses all her anger on the outside threat, on the enemies who want to bring him down," a former White House staff member says.

DAVID LEVINE

Another explanation for the First Lady's radiance is less charitable: she looks good at such times because she is invigorated. Her husband needs her desperately; she is the essential element in his defense. Some Clinton acquaintances see this as a matter of love and insecurity: the First Lady is eager to win the President's affection whenever, and however, she can. A less friendly interpretation is that it may be a matter of power: if he's in her debt for defending him, she has more leverage to pursue her staffing and her policy objectives.

Certainly the darkest periods for Hillary Rodham Clinton over the past six years have had nothing to do with any of the "bimbo eruptions." One was in late 1994, after her health-insurance-reform plan seemed a major factor in losing control of Congress to the Republicans; another was in early 1996, friends say, after her Rose Law Firm billing records suddenly, and very suspiciously, materialized in the White House. "You have to realize that the President always saw her as magic politically," a former staff member says. "He thought she had the magic touch." Several people remember a meeting in early July of 1992, when the Clinton team was brainstorming his Democratic National Convention acceptance speech. Mrs. Clinton was the one who came up with the last line—"I still believe in a place called Hope"—and "the look Clinton gave her when that happened was unforgettable," one recalls. "It was like, 'You always know the right thing.' "

But then, after her team's clunky performance on health-care reform, and her own refusal to take the Whitewater inquiry seriously at first, it seemed the First Lady had lost track of "the right thing" and become a political liability. (At that point, too, the President seemed convinced that the consultant Dick Morris had the magic touch.) That was a rough time, some friends say, which was relieved only when the First Lady went off on her worldwide travels, especially the spring vacations she took with her daughter, Chelsea.

When I accompanied Mrs. Clinton on her first big overseas trip—to South Asia, in the spring of 1995—she seemed to be actively reassessing her political philosophy after the healthcare debacle. She was clearly impressed by the creativity of the non-governmental programs she visited, and she had lengthy discussions with her staff and with friends about the limits of government, about whether poor women and their children—her lifelong obsession—might possibly best be served through programs that circumvented traditional bureaucracies (programs that Republicans like Newt Gingrich, about whom she was quite curious, might agree to spend money on). "The health-care fight—and Whitewater, of course—taught her a lot about herself and people and politics in Washington," Lisa Caputo, her former press secretary, says. "She definitely changed after that. Her sense of what her 'zone of privacy' was changed. As she said in her Whitewater press conference, she 'rezoned' herself."

The South Asia trip also gave many of the reporters who went along a chance to get a closer look at Mrs. Clinton's relationship with her daughter. Its normality was remarkable, given the circumstances. Chelsea seemed poised and

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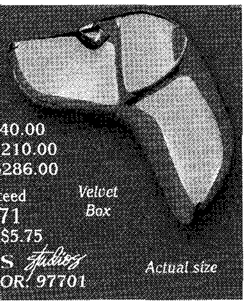

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smart; she had no reluctance about interrupting her mother—correcting her, at times—when the two chatted with reporters about the day's events. "What I remember about that trip was the First Lady and Chelsea getting on the phone with the President and talking his ear off about what we were seeing," Melanne Verveer, the First Lady's chief of staff, says. "It's a constant thing with her when we're away. She's always saying, 'I can't wait to tell Bill about this.' "

While stories of intense battles between the President and the First Lady—always involving disputes about policy or political strategy, never about personal matters (at least, not in front of the help)—are common, former staff members are adamant about the closeness of the Clintons' bond. "When I think about them," Neel Lattimore, the First Lady's former deputy press secretary, says, "I think about the two of them sitting on a couch on Air Force One, holding hands, telling some old political story and arguing about who's going to tell which part—and finishing each other's sentences. The chemistry is just out there—they're such great friends."

STILL, one wonders how Hillary Rodham Clinton actually does it—how she can defend her husband so staunchly and with such a straight face. Her closest friends say that the subject of his dalliances is one she never talks about. "I think she literally decides that she believes him," a former staff member says. "She focusses all her anger on the outside threat, on the enemies who want to bring him down." Several friends say that Mrs. Clinton makes a conscious effort not to get caught up in the media frenzy. She doesn't watch television or read the newspapers; she assumes that most of the pundits are opponents in any case. It doesn't hurt that she has, by nature, a more extreme sensibility than her husband. She is very much a Methodist of the moralizing, nineteenth-century sort; in another time, she might have been a founding member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. ("She is more likely to see things in black-and-white than he is," a close friend says.) This seems to be a matter of personal style rather than of political ideology; her liberalism is more pragmatic than flaming (although when she ran the health-care task force she was known to rail against the evils of "incrementalism"). She does have a weakness for fervent, all-or-nothing friends—Susan Thomases and Sidney Blumenthal are two—who tend to see the world severely divided between friends and enemies, and encourage her to see things the same way. (Time reported last week that Blumenthal "created a gigantic diagram inside his office outlining with circles and arrows the byzantine Republican conspiracy surrounding the [Monica Lewinsky] tapes.")

"Hillary taught me how to think in situations like these," one Clintonite says. "For example, a story suddenly appears in the Dallas Morning News that a Secret Service agent has witnessed Clinton and Lewinsky in a 'compromising' act in the White House. The Dallas Morning News? That's immediately suspicious. Dallas is where Paula Jones's lawyers are. Dallas is where Gennifer Flowers hangs out. And even more suspicious is the timing: the story appears on the very day that Monica Lewinsky is trying to make up her mind about what sort of deal to make with Ken Starr. It's a leak that is very much to Starr's tactical advantage—I'm sure that's how Hillary would see it. And then the story disappears within twenty-four hours. The Dallas Morning News simply retracts it. When the First Lady talks about a conspiracy, I think that's the sort of thing she means."

If so, she could be a lot more precise about it. Her wild claim on "Today" that a "vast right-wing conspiracy . . . has been conspiring against my husband" was absurd, but not quite counterproductive. It was, in fact, very smart politics: "It was a diversion," a former Clinton staff member told me. "It gave the press something to write about other than Monica Lewinsky."

Indeed, right-wing ideologues have long marvelled at the Clintons' ability to do many of the same things the First Lady accuses Kenneth Starr of: the controlled leaks, diversionary tactics, smear campaigns against their opponents. Certainly they are masters of political theatre, as the President's State of the Union performance and the First Lady's television interviews proved once again. The day of the State of the Union Message began well before dawn for Mrs. Clinton, with preparations for the "Today" appearance, and ended well after midnight, with a jubilant party for staff and friends at the White House. She was up early the next morning for her interview on ABC's "Good Morning America," while the President headed out to press the flesh in the Midwest, accompanied by approval polls that rose with astounding speed as tragedy seemed to turn into farce. (Who, for example, could have guessed that a former teacher would call Lewinsky a stalker? Who could have guessed that Dick Morris would sound like a cad on a Los Angeles call-in program?) By week's end, the Clintons were triumphant.

There was, though, a quality to Mrs. Clinton's performance—the composed feverishness of it—that recalled a Victorian medical phenomenon called "the hectic flush," a roseate glow that women dying of consumption took on just before the bitter end. But the paranoid tinge had served her political purposes well. The sense of impending danger and implacable enemies had reinforced her belief that she and the President are doing important, historic things, and also reinforced her ability to reject even the most plausible claims against her husband. "I'm amazed by the political naïveté—the good-versus-evil quality—of her whole operation," a White House aide told me several months ago. "It has enormous influence over the way things are done in this Administration, and I don't think it has been a particularly positive influence."

ON the evening before her "Today" interview, Hillary Rodham Clinton attended a fund-raising dinner for UNICEF, where she received a sustained and emotional standing ovation. Her remarks were eloquent and brief. She was at home. This was her political family—the Eleanor Roosevelt wing of the Democratic Party. It represents a decided personal advantage that she has over her husband, and one that may become more apparent if the Lewinsky siege ends badly. There will always be a solid wedge of the Democratic Party that will admire Hillary Clinton and identify with her, no matter what happens.

The President has no such home. Indeed, in the unlikely event that Bill Clinton is forced out of office he will have no obvious place to go—no San Clemente, no Plains. He has lived in public housing for nearly two decades. A career's worth of often inspired ideological improvisation has left him politically homeless as well, without a devoted, uncritical constituency. Except for her. ♦

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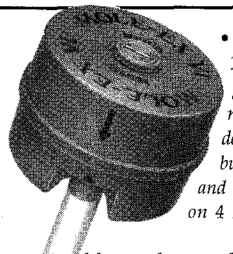

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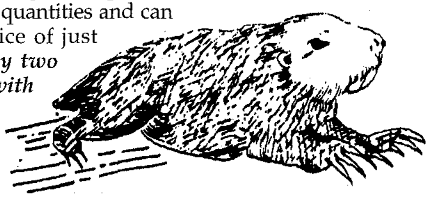

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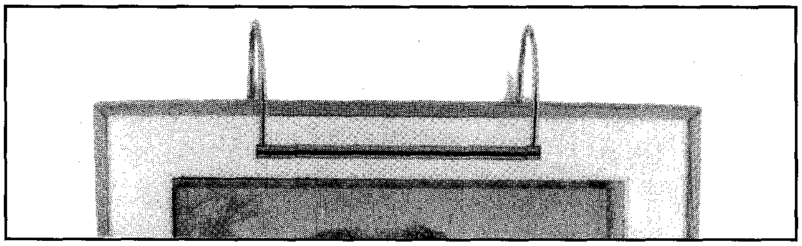

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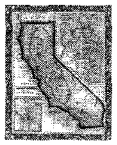

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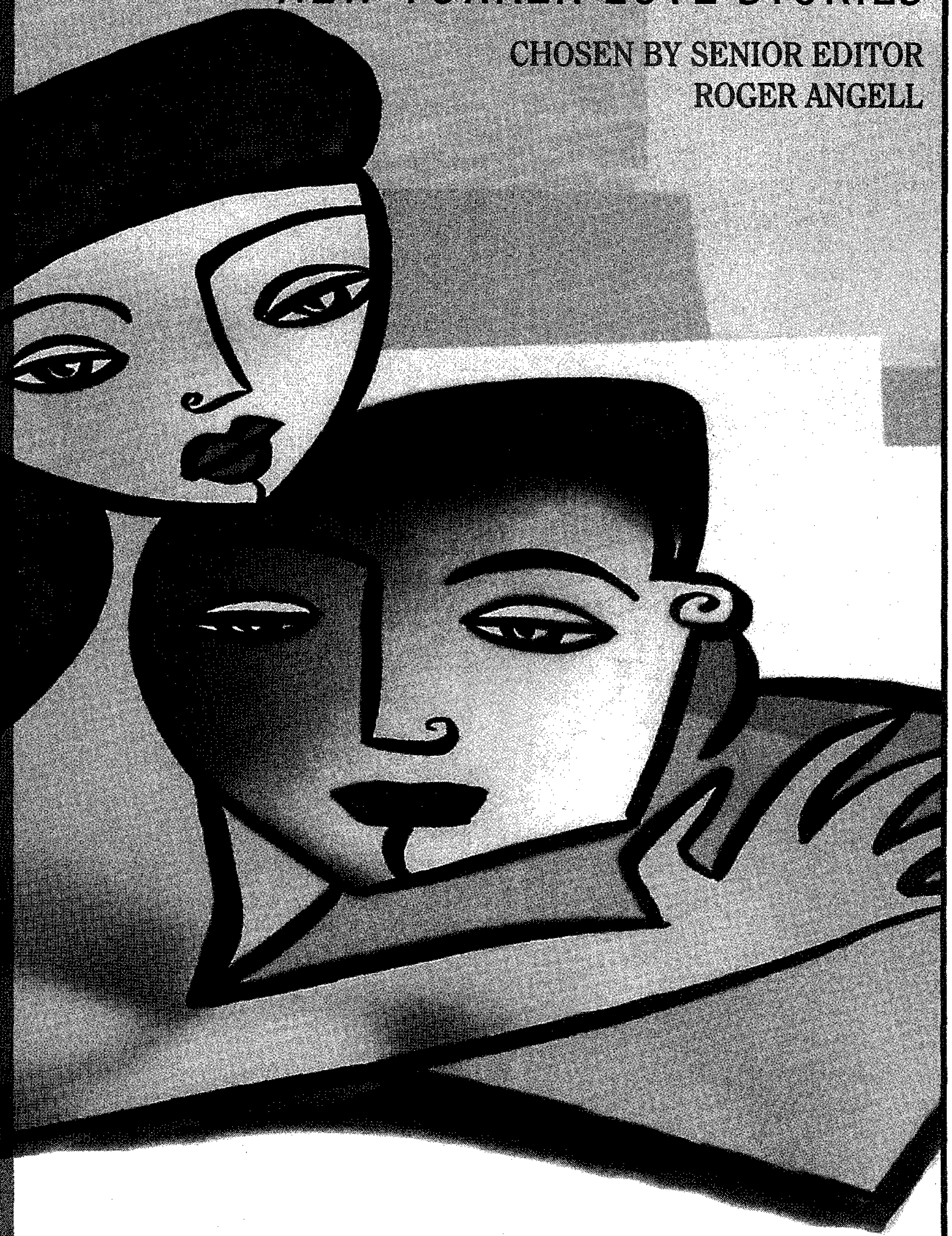

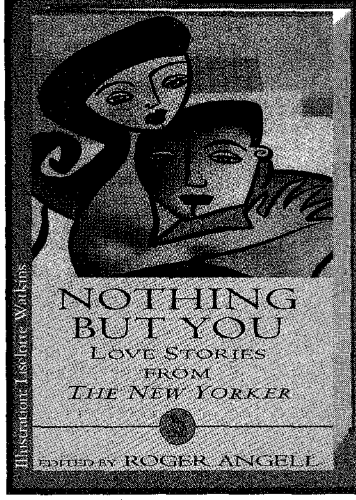

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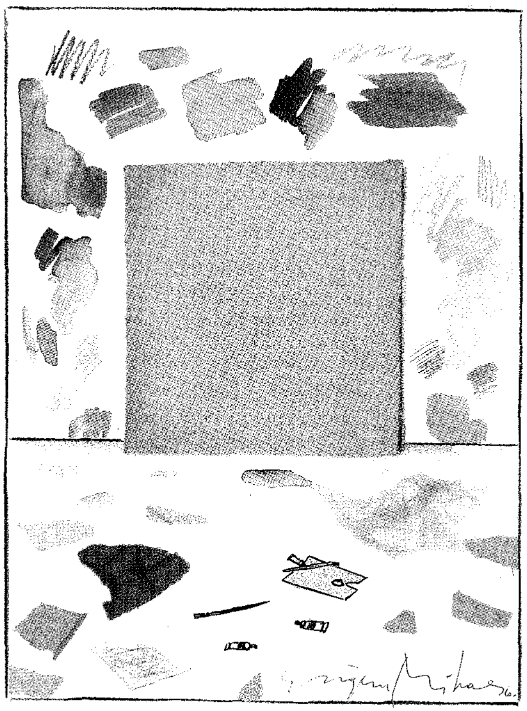
BY LOUIS MENAND

YASMINA REZA'S one-act play " 'Art,' " which opens here this winter, is about a white-on-white abstract painting that nearly ruins a friendship among three men. A character named Serge buys the painting for an extravagant sum; his friend Marc, invited to admire the new purchase, pronounces it "shit"; the third friend, Yvan, who has no aesthetic views (or is happy to see equal merit in both views), is made wretched by the subsequent bickering, to which most of the play's ninety minutes are devoted.



EUGENE MIHAESCO

By far the most interesting thing about " 'Art' " is its popularity. It premièred in Berlin, and in 1994 opened in Paris, where it ran for eighteen months at the Comédie des Champs-Élysées and won the Molière Award for best play, best production, and best author. Sean Connery's wife, Micheline, saw the French production and persuaded her husband to bring the play to London, where, with Connery as co-producer, in a translation by Christopher Hampton, and starring Albert Finney and Tom Courtenay, it opened in 1996 and was a big hit all over again.

As the quotation marks in the title signal, the play basically sides with Marc, the character who thinks that his friend's notion of "art" is ridiculous. Still, it suggests, Marc is taking his outrage a shade too seriously, since, as phony as the painting probably is, there's no point in spoiling a friendship over it. This is evidently a view that suits the audience that has made " 'Art' " an international success. When I saw the play in London last fall, the audience laughed earnestly at every one of Marc's rather blunt and obvious gibes but gasped in horror when, toward the end of the play, he defaced the painting with a felt-tip pen. They agreed that the canvas had no aesthetic merit, but they felt that its market value ought to be respected.

What's odd about the play is the notion that a white-on-white canvas represents the latest refinement in avant-garde pretension. White-on-white canvases were the latest refinement in avant-garde pretension forty years ago. And monochrome art didn't represent a sneer at aesthetic values. It represented the culmination of aestheticism, the final distillation of the idea of painting as painting. The fictional Serge has invested in one of the prime artifacts of an era that the real-life, present-day avant-garde is in boisterous reaction against. The tacky "representational" landscape that hangs in Marc's living room is a lot more plausibly postmodern than his friend's Greenbergian antique.

What does seem right about " 'Art,' " though, is how inarticulate the characters become when they attempt to justify their reactions to Serge's painting ("shit" is perhaps not the critical *mot juste* for an all-white canvas) and how quickly the disagreement turns personal. This is, at bottom, what the audiences are probably

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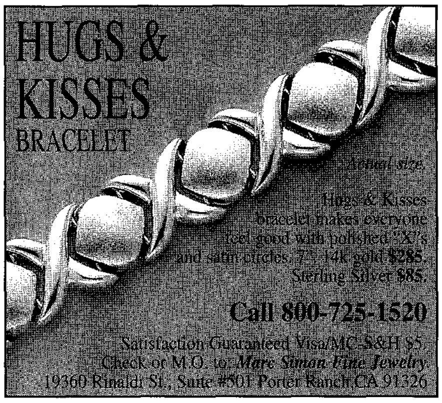

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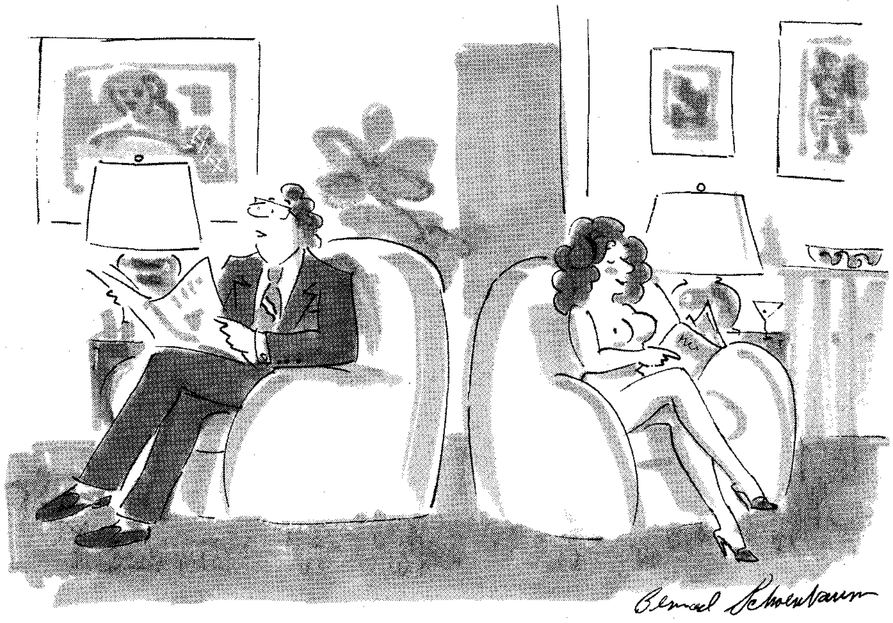
responding to. They've been in these situations themselves, and, although the relationships in the play are not very convincing—it's hard to understand how these three guys ever got to be friends in the first place, so the damage to their friendship is somewhat lacking in poignancy—the spectacle of a disagreement about art devolving into a bitter spat about personalities carries a certain low-level shock of recognition.

The incoherence and inconclusiveness of the aesthetic arguments in "'Art'" strike a chord because people have lost any clear sense of what a coherent and conclusive aesthetic argument would look like. This is not the result of dumbing down; it's the result of smartening up. It derives from the view that aesthetic arguments are really only ex-post-facto justifications for art that people happen to like, and this seems to have become the advanced view on the subject.

Last fall when the *Times* asked seventeen "art-world participants and observers" the question "What is art?," all the experts gave the same answer. They said that the question has no answer. The art historians Thomas McEvilley ("It seems pretty clear by now that more or less anything can be designated as art") and Robert Rosenblum ("By now the idea of defining art is so remote I don't think anyone would dare to do it"), William Rubin, of the Museum of Modern Art ("There is no single definition of art"), Philippe de Montebello, of the Metropolitan Museum of Art ("There's no consensus about anything today"), Arthur Danto, a philosopher and the art critic of *The Nation* ("You can't say something's art or not art anymore. That's all finished"), and Peter Hoekstra, a Republican congressman from Michigan, who is a leading opponent of the National Endowment for the Arts ("Art is whatever people want to perceive it to be"), all agreed. There can be no definition of art, because art is just whatever people say it is.

The triumph of the consensus of no consensus should be gratifying to Arthur Danto, who has been trying since 1984 to explain why it is no longer possible, by referring to the way it looks, to distinguish something that is a work of art from something that is not. His argument, eloquently summed up in his most recent book, "After the End of Art," is that after Andy Warhol exhibited simulacra of Brillo boxes (actually of shipping cartons for Brillo boxes), in 1964, anything could be art. With "Brillo Box," the history of art came to an end. There was no longer a master narrative dictating what form works of art should take next, since having a particular form no longer determined whether a thing was a work of art.

People in London who last fall walked from the theatre where "'Art'" was playing across Piccadilly Circus to the Royal Academy of Arts could see realized, in an exhibition, from the Saatchi Collection, called "Sensation," the polymorphous vision that must have been dancing in Danto's head when he introduced his theory back in 1984: snapshots, videos, abstract paintings, figurative paintings, found ob-



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jects, installations, and the dead animals of Damien Hirst. A characteristic piece—"Self," by Marc Quinn—is listed in the catalogue as having been rendered in the following media: blood, stainless steel, Perspex, and refrigeration equipment. Chris Ofili's works on linen were executed in oil paint, polyester resin, map pins, and elephant dung. If Serge had a Lucite box containing the head of a cow crawling with maggots on display in his living room (which is the substance of a piece by Hirst entitled "A Thousand Years"), "'Art'" would seem a lot more up to date.

Danto still believes that art has essential qualities; he just doesn't think that those qualities reside in its appearance. But it's easy to slip from the recognition that anything could be art to the position that art is an arbitrary category. Danto calls his conception of post-historical art "pluralist," meaning that all forms of expression are now permitted; and one reason so many of the people in the *Times* survey echo his view is that pluralism is the ascendant philosophy of the day. Nobody wants to get caught asserting that one type of art is inherently better than another—not even Congressman Hoekstra. Pluralist talk about tastes and values is everywhere. The belief that we should never fall into the grip of a single belief has us firmly in its grip.

Pluralism is an admirable point of view, but it wouldn't be much use if it prevented people from judging anything. The way to do the right pluralist thing today, therefore, seems to involve the following decorum: you do not criticize someone else's tastes or values by saying they are inferior, perverted, uncivilized, or "not art." That kind of talk is invidious, and suggests that you are applying standards you imagine to be impersonal. Instead, you say, "I don't happen to like it," and you are absolved of chauvinism. You are also absolved of attending to any reasons you should like it. When liking is all, disliking is enough.

If you are a pro-arts person, of course, you're supposed to keep your dislikes to yourself (which is why the audience for "'Art'" disapproves of Marc's antics, even though they sympathize with his exasperation). One of the pieces in the "Sensation" exhibition in London was a large clock—"A Bigger Clock," by Darren Almond. Every sixty seconds, it emitted a tremendous reverberating noise, like the amplified sound of a prison door slamming shut. The piece was mounted in the lobby, where the tickets and the catalogues were sold. I bought my catalogue from a young guy who looked like the kind of fairly hip young guy you would expect to find selling catalogues in a gallery. I asked him if listening to this amplified sound of a prison door slamming shut every sixty seconds all day might possibly get a little—well, old. He gave me a look that said, "If I could get my hands on the guy who made that thing, I would personally strangle the bastard." But all he actually said was "A little."

In dispensing with a single definition of art, we are liberating ourselves less completely than we imagine. The regime of "no definition" is just as dictatorial as every previous regime. A pluralist consensus demands a pluralist art. When the official art-world position is that art can look like anything, you get the kind of art on display in the "Sensation" show—that is, art that looks the way art would look if art could look like anything. As long as "art" is a term that confers value on an object (and there's no reason to have the term at all if it doesn't), people will mean something by it, whether or not they are willing to say so to the *Times*. There is no exit from concepts.

For the artists themselves, philosophical definitions are usually secondary anyway. As easily persuaded of his own significance as he was, Warhol probably didn't think he was bringing the history of art to an end. He had a much more parochial ambition in mind: he wanted to succeed Jackson Pollock as the American art king. "POPism," his brilliantly catty memoir of the demise of the genius-driven, Abstract Expressionist, macho New York art world of the fifties, has a story that's so close to the story of "'Art'" it's hard to believe Reza doesn't know it. One day around 1960, Warhol drops in on his friend Emile de Antonio, who owns one of Frank Stella's early black paintings, and finds him distraught. A neighbor had seen the Stella on the wall, de Antonio recounts, and asked what it was. When he told her it was a painting, she burst out laughing: *That* was a painting? And she walked over and poured a bottle of whiskey on it, completely ruining it. Just then, the phone rings and, coincidentally, it's Stella. De Antonio describes ruefully what has just happened to his painting. Stella tells him not to worry. He'll make him another one just like it. ♦

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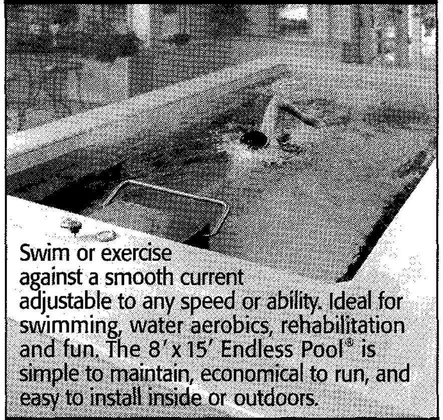

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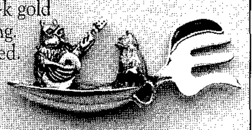

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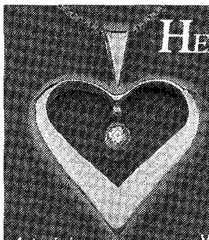

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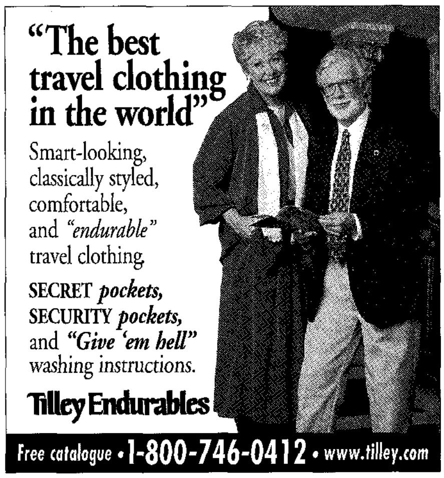

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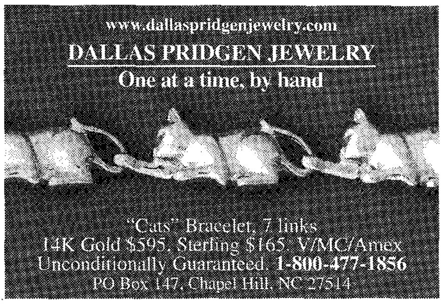

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ANNALS OF MEDICINE

DECODING DESTINY

Once a genetic test proved that she was likely to develop breast cancer, she had to confront one of contemporary medicine's scariest questions.

BY JEROME GROOPMAN

NOT long ago, Karen Belz made an appointment to see me in my office. I'd known her for years, as a family friend. She worked as an English teacher at a local high school, played in the same tennis league as my wife, had two school-age children, and was active in town politics. Always frank and direct in her dealings, she expected the same from others. Now she was telling me that she wanted to be tested for mutations in the so-called breast-cancer genes, BRCA1 and BRCA2. "I can't continue in this limbo," she said. "I have to know."

I wasn't surprised, because she wasn't the first member of the Belz family to visit my office. (For purposes of confidentiality, the names and certain identifying details have been altered.) Karen's mother, Eva, after a long struggle, had succumbed to breast cancer some three years ago. Five months earlier, Karen's sister Ruth, only two years older than she was, had developed the same malignancy, at age thirty-six. By the time Ruth's gynecologist detected the cancer on her routine surveillance mammogram, it had spread to her vertebrae and her lungs. I was currently treating her with intensive chemotherapy and radiation. Shortly after her tumor was diagnosed, Ruth had tested positive for a BRCA mutation linked to breast cancer and had pressed Karen to be tested as well.

Marek Belz, Karen and Ruth's father, was strongly opposed to his daughters' being tested, fearing that the result would one day be exploited to harm his family. He was familiar with the abuse of genetics. Marek had escaped from Poland a year before the Nazi invasion, with Eva. When she became ill, neither could tell me about the occurrence of cancer in close family members: every member of their own generation and every member of the generation before had perished in the Holocaust. Karen, however, was unmoved by her father's opposition: she told him she'd simply have to take the risk. Since Ruth's diagnosis—first of cancer and then of the aberrant gene—the anxiety of not knowing had dominated Karen's thoughts, preventing her from getting to sleep and then shocking her awake at 3 or 4 A.M. Her daydreams were penetrated by memories of her mother's slow death, and she had nightmares that Ruth would soon be lost as well. Not knowing seemed worse than knowing.

All participants in cancer-genetic-susceptibility programs are required to read and sign an informed-consent document before being tested. At Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, ours comes with some assurances. The patient can elect not to know the test result immediately but to wait until she is ready, or even change her mind and never know; the result is to be given only to her, in person and by her own physician; the fact that she has been tested, as well as the test's outcome, does not appear in her medical records but is stored in a locked research file, identified by a code number; the list connecting the code with her name is kept separate from the test results; and no insurance company, governmental agency, health worker, family member, or other party can obtain the test result without her written permission.

I informed Karen of the protocol, and read to her a section entitled "Potential Risks of Knowing Your Genetic Test Result," which states, "This information may cause you distress, sadness, depression, anxiety, or anger."

"I look forward to all of the above," Karen said acidly.

BRCA testing is one of the first fruits of the human-genome project. The project is vast and ambitious, and has enlisted the energies of scientists and clinicians around the globe. The goal is to decipher the code of all human DNA—our genetic blueprint—and then to use the information to understand how each gene contributes to health or to disease. The task should be completed within one or two decades.

The informed-consent document that Karen signed before being tested is specific for the genetic testing of BRCA1 and 2, two genes among the estimated hundred thousand genes contained within our forty-six chromosomes. All human beings carry two copies of each of their genes, one inherited from their mother and one from their father. Women who inherit a single defective copy of either BRCA1 or BRCA2 are at a significantly increased risk for breast and ovarian cancer over the course of their lives. Of some two hundred thousand new cases of these two cancers which will occur in the United States this year, between three and a half and seven per cent will be the result of inherited mutations in the BRCA genes. There is a particularly high incidence among Ashkenazi Jews, like the Belzes. This probably reflects the so-called founder effect: the Ashkenazi population arose from relatively few "founder" families, which migrated east into Poland, Lithuania, and Russia, with very little marrying outside the community, and thus conserved the mutation from generation to generation. The combined frequency of BRCA1 and 2 mutations among Ashkenazi Jews is greater than two per cent, a very high number in population genetics.

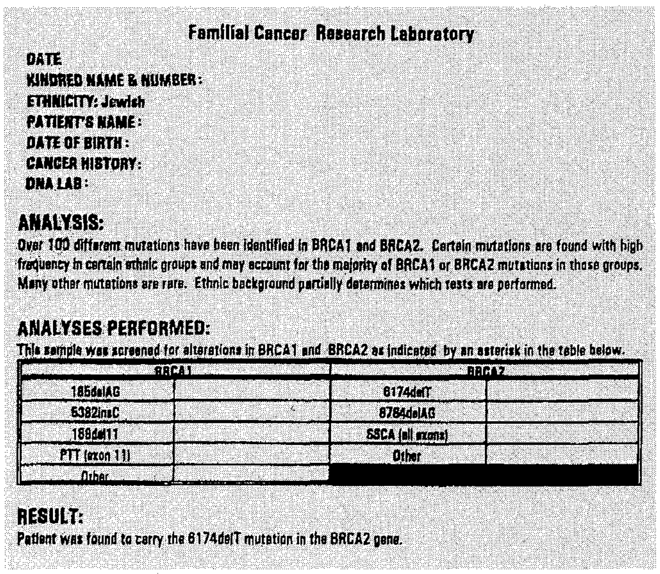
Will knowing the potential pathologies of our genes distort the natural order of our lives?

"Why would a gene that promotes deadly cancers be conserved during evolution?" Karen asked.

There is no exact answer, I told her, but we could extrapolate from Darwinian principles. Nature cares only about an organism's reaching the point of reproduction and nurturing the next generation. Since the mutated BRCA genes do not impair fertility, and generally wreak their havoc beyond the age at which children would be produced and reared, there is no apparent evolutionary pressure to select against the genes. Their perpetuation might even be a benefit to the population, by shortening the life span of adults who were taking precious food and water away from the younger generation.

"What a wonderful Malthusian gift," she said, with a grim smile.

Mutations often occur within our genes, for the enzymes that copy DNA when a cell grows and divides are imperfect and make random mistakes. Mutations in DNA also occur when we are exposed to radiation or to certain toxins in the environment. In most instances, these mutations don't really matter: either the changes are trivial and well tolerated by the cell or they're so damaging that the cell dies, with limited consequences. But some mutations are neither trivial nor lethal. These pervert the cell's behavior, causing it to proliferate wildly and assault vital organs. This is the pathological process we call cancer.



Familial Cancer Research Laboratory

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KINDRED NAME & NUMBER:
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PATIENT'S NAME:
DATE OF BIRTH:
CANCER HISTORY:
DNA LAB:

ANALYSIS:

Over 100 different mutations have been identified in BRCA1 and BRCA2. Certain mutations are found with high frequency in certain ethnic groups and may account for the majority of BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutations in those groups. Many other mutations are rare. Ethnic background partially determines which tests are performed.

ANALYSES PERFORMED:

This sample was screened for alterations in BRCA1 and BRCA2 as indicated by an asterisk in the table below.

BRCA1		BRCA2	
185delAG		6174delT	
5382insC		8784delAG	
188del11		SSCA (all exons)	
PTT (exon 11)		Other	
Other			

RESULT:

Patient was found to carry the 6174delT mutation in the BRCA2 gene.

The normal BRCA2 gene is composed of 10,254 nucleotides, or DNA building blocks. The BRCA2 gene carried by the Belz family was missing nucleotide No. 6,174. This single omission results in a short and crippled form of the protein that BRCA2 codes for. At the time of the test, I had explained to Karen that the normal function of BRCA genes is understood only in general terms. The most recent research suggests that they somehow repair damaged DNA, rehabilitating nascent cancer cells like an interventional therapist. Why, when the genes malfunction, cancers arise only in breast and ovary, and not in other tissues, is still a mystery, but it suggests that sex hormones like estrogen somehow modulate its activities.

FIVE weeks later, Karen and I sat again in my office. I had just given her the test result. "So I'm destined for cancer, just like my mother and sister," she said. "Talk to me straight, Jerry. I should get rid of my breasts and ovaries, shouldn't I?"

Karen's style was to cut to the heart of the matter, but I worried that she was moving too fast. It wasn't possible to say even that she was destined for cancer, let alone talk to her straight about what to do. I felt off balance, without a platform of established clinical data upon which to stand. It is a moment of inadequacy that every physician dreads, realizing that while current knowledge is severely limited, a course must be taken—a course that might prove fatally flawed in the future. I paused, studying Karen's unflinching face: deep-set almond brown eyes, sculpted Slavic cheekbones, and determined chin.

I was tempted to hide behind the popular notion that patients alone are "empowered" to choose their therapy, and simply tell her that it was her decision. But wasn't that a kind of cowardice—an easy out? The decision had to be hers; but that didn't mean she had to make it alone. "Remember that our genes are just the starting point, far from the whole picture," I cautioned. "Their program during life is modified by many factors. Despite having the same mutation in a BRCA gene, you are different from your mother and from Ruth."

"But how different? That's what I need to know. And you can't really say, can you?"

"I can't," I admitted. I went on to explain that the BRCA2 gene was identified in 1995, just two years before, so the available data tell us mainly about the over-all susceptibility of the affected group to cancer and not about specific individual outcomes. One set of clinical data on BRCA mutations indicates that the age at which tumors first occur is

LEFT: MEDICHROME/HOWARD SOCHUREK

highly variable. Although recent surveys of Ashkenazi Jews indicate that the risk for breast cancer with a BRCA mutation is about sixty per cent, in families with several closely related cases of the disease the risk is higher, on the order of between seventy-five and ninety per cent. Still significant, but somewhat lower, is the risk for ovarian cancer, about twenty per cent. "Keep in mind that these odds are actuarial—projections over the course of a person's lifetime, culled from a handful of preliminary studies in the United States and Israel," I told her. "Nonetheless, I think one can accept them as accurate approximations."

I stopped speaking, in part to give Karen a chance to ask questions, in part because I didn't like the way I sounded. It was important to provide her with all the available information on the mutation, but I had heard my language becoming increasingly remote and clinical.

Karen's face had turned into a mask, and I feared that she was numb from having learned her test result, that the swirl of uncertain numbers had passed by her in a blur. When I asked if everything was clear, however, Karen said it was. She had already garnered most of this information from the Internet. She was waiting for me to get to her question.

"Should you have your breasts and ovaries removed?" The question hung suspended between us for a long moment. "To answer most helpfully, I'd have to be sitting where you are, rather than on my side of the desk, and be a thirty-four-year-old woman, with two children and a solid marriage. So I'm limited on these counts. But if I had a genetic mutation analogous to yours, carrying as much as a ninety-per-cent risk of, say, testicular cancer, and a twenty-per-cent risk of prostate cancer, and my father had died from it, and my brother now had it, despite close medical surveillance—regular physical and radiological examinations, biopsies, and blood tests—and he was undergoing intensive chemotherapy and radiation treatments for metastases, with all their toxicities and an uncertain chance of cure, what would I do?" I wanted, as I spoke, to spark intuition, hers and mine. "And I faced two unsatisfactory choices: one conservative, waiting under surveillance, and one radical, undergoing surgery, with no real middle ground—"

"Is there actually nothing more than that?" Karen interrupted. "I accept that there's no simple solution. But you feel desperate when you hear that that's all there is. You want to do something for yourself, something proactive, and not just live under surveillance. It seems like passively waiting in the ghetto to be selected."

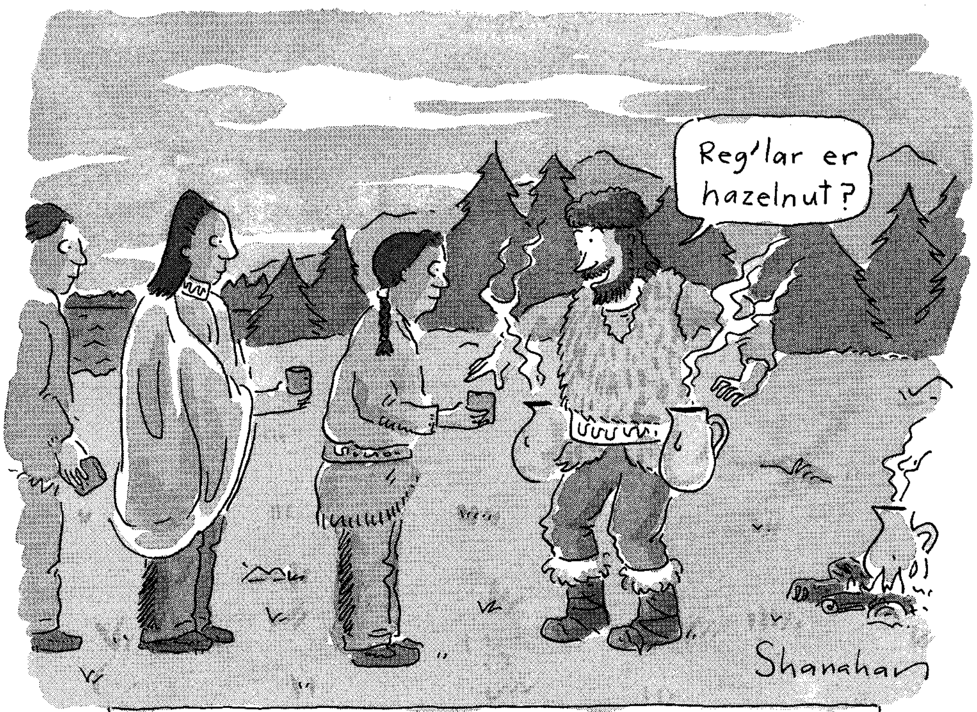
When Ruth became ill, Karen told me, well-meaning friends had bombarded them both with suggestions: eat strictly organic, take megavitamins, avoid all alcohol and fats, try special herbal tonics and Eastern healing techniques. Karen and I now talked about such suggestions. Many of these nostrums were harmless, and some, for all anyone knew, might even be helpful, but they remained unproved and could not be relied on to prevent breast or ovarian cancer in a woman who was genetically predisposed. Prophylactic studies of estrogen antagonists like tamoxifen are just being organized and will take years to yield data on risk and benefit.

As we spoke, I could see her brow fall and her eyes become heavy. I knew that what I had to say would be even more unnerving and had best be delivered quickly.

"If surgery were to give me a full guarantee against cancer, I'd probably sacrifice intimate parts of my body in exchange for it, with all that that means regarding sex and self-image," I said. "But no one really knows how much protection is gained by such mutilating surgery, because the data are scant." No one had had the opportunity to follow women with BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutations who chose surveillance instead of having their breasts and ovaries removed. There were only extrapolations from the past, when healthy women who had strong family histories of these cancers chose surgery. But this was a heterogeneous group, not genetically defined, and had come into being before the era of high-quality mammograms, pelvic ultrasonography, and blood tests, which could identify tumors at their onset. "Unfortunately," I added, "it's all we have to go on."

"And?" Karen put in.

"And removing both breasts is roughly estimated to reduce your risk of cancer by ninety per cent but not to zero," I said. Even the most meticulous mastectomy, I explained, leaves some cells behind that can later transform and become malignant. Oophorectomy—removing the ovaries—would be likely to reduce her risk of cancer, but, again, not to zero. There are often microscopic islands of ovarian cells growing outside the ovaries. These islands stud the peritoneum, the lining of



HOW THE NORTHWEST WAS WON

ROUNDSTONE COVE

The wind rises. The sea snarls in the fog
far from the attentive beaches of childhood—
no picnic, no striped chairs, no sand, no sun.

Here even by day cliffs obstruct the sun;
moonlight miles out mocks this abyss of fog.
I walk big-bellied, lost in motherhood,

hunched in a shell of coat, a blindered hood.
Alone a long time, I remember sun—
poor magic effort to undo the fog.

Fog hoods me. But the hood of fog is sun.

—Marie Ponsot

the abdomen, and are too small to be found and cut out by the surgeon during the operation. They can provide the seeds of cancer after the ovaries are excised.

"And the success of intensive surveillance in finding the cancer early, before it spreads, like Ruthie's?" Karen pressed.

"Unknown over the long term," I replied.

I paused, then told her that nonetheless most women I care for, and presumably most women nationwide, currently elect this conservative approach of surveillance rather than the radical surgery.

In the shared silence, Karen gathered herself into a tightly held coil, as if she were a child chilled to the bone and were trying to protect her body's ebbing warmth: head bowed, arms crossed over her chest, legs tightly drawn together. "I can't do it," she said, finally. "I can't get rid of my breasts and my ovaries."

I was taken aback. As we talked I had been imagining Karen as my wife, Pam, and the Belz family as my in-laws, and I had convinced myself that I would want Pam to have the operation—that the physical alteration of her body would not change who she was or the substance of our relationship. And Karen was a friend as well as a patient. I had mourned the death of her mother and was now afraid that Ruth would soon succumb as well. Above all, I wanted Karen to be saved. Surely that imperative overrode the loss of breasts and ovaries, of self-image and libido. But I hadn't understood her as well as I thought I had.

"The final decision shouldn't be made today," I said, giving us both more time. "Just as we didn't immediately go ahead with the test. It's best to think more before committing to a course." I watched her carefully. She exhaled heavily and nodded.

We agreed to meet in a week to talk again about the options. I stated that afterward I would refer her to the clinical psychologist in the cancer program, to give her the opportunity to explore her decision with another professional, and perhaps from a different perspective.

And maybe I needed a different perspective myself. After Karen left, I tried to organize my thoughts by recording a summary of our conversation in her medical chart. But I was stopped by the realization of something that neither of us had brought up. What of her children? Her daughter was thirteen and her son eleven, both at an age where explanations are required. When and how should they learn about the BRCA2 gene?

My focus was drawn to the pictures of my family arrayed on my desk. There were Pam and I dancing at our wedding, joined by a white handkerchief, in traditional Ashkenazi style. Pam's family had a history of breast cancer, and this past year my mother had developed it. Beside the wedding photograph was a picture of Emmy, my five-year-old daughter, on a swing, caught by the camera in a moment of fearless glee. What terrible aberrations hid in the fabric of her DNA, waiting for age and hormones and the myriad triggers of the environment to unleash them? Would the effort to unravel DNA condemn Emmy to the twilit terror that Karen had just entered? Perhaps it was best for all of us to remain ignorant, so that life could progress naturally, without the burden of deadly prophecies. It sometimes seemed as if the decoding of our genome would cause a fundamental change in how we perceive time—as if we would come to ponder not the infinite time of an expanding universe but the sharply limited span of our existence. Like Karen, all of us will face the choice of learning our probabilities of illness. In addition to those in BRCA1 and 2, genetic mutations that predispose people to Alzheimer's disease, colon cancer, Huntington's disease, endocrine tumors, and melanoma have been identified. The list will grow until it encompasses all our potential pathologies. We might try to shrug off the knowledge, or run from it, but when we had quiet moments during the day or woke in the middle of the night we would be forced to accept it as our constant companion, because we could see its features in our very being.

And then it struck me that these new genetic terrors were like the ones I had come to know in my years of clinical and scientific work on AIDS. People with H.I.V. permanently acquire the destructive genes of this virus. They, too, live with a genetic time bomb. Vociferous debates racked the at-risk communities, particularly those of gay men and hemophiliacs: Should you be tested? Could the results be used to deny you insurance or opportunity in the workplace? What could you do for yourself to stave off the disease? Why did medical science seem powerless to find a cure?

A few years back, I had faced the decision of whether or not to be tested for H.I.V. All health-care workers were encouraged to have themselves screened, and so were researchers who, like me, had worked with H.I.V. in their laboratories. I knew I was at especially great risk of having been exposed to the virus. Before gloves and other precautions were instituted in hospitals, my hands had been soiled directly by infected blood and secretions, and I'd once pricked my finger deeply with a contaminated needle after performing a bone-marrow biopsy on an AIDS patient. I had also received multiple blood transfusions during spine surgery in 1980, a time before blood products were screened for H.I.V.

For months, I avoided scheduling the test, finding excuses in the demands of work and travel. But finally I went ahead, feeling, like Karen, that I had to know. I also accepted the fact that the result could change my plans for work and family. Even after obtaining the negative result, I was still visited by the nightmares I had experienced while waiting, and found myself wondering whether I might be one of those rare people whose infection was not detected by the test.

Though I observed the anguish among those who learned that they had tested positive, I was also struck by the way the awareness could catalyze beneficial changes. It led many people to take better care of themselves—stop smoking, end drug use, improve diet, take up exercise, seek stress reduction. On a community level, activist movements forced the F.D.A., universities, and pharmaceutical companies to accelerate the process of drug research and development. Above all, the knowledge that one carried H.I.V. and was mortal gave many young people a precocious sense of maturity and wisdom.

The advances that had been made in developing safer and more effective treatments for H.I.V. could not have occurred without testing people with the virus at different stages of the illness. The most important breakthrough—the creation of the protease inhibitors—grew from an intimate understanding of the genes of H.I.V. and of how they functioned in an infected host. If we had not used our molecular tools to test for the virus and assess the range and the patterns of its growth in people, we would not have developed these potent drugs.

Testing also revealed that some people never became infected despite extensive exposure to H.I.V. Many of them had a mutation in a host gene which conferred resistance to H.I.V. Such people are serendipitously resistant to the virus, because H.I.V. is unable to get a grip on their blood cells and penetrate them. The inherited mutation causes no apparent harm: these fortunate individuals seem completely healthy.

Such findings provide the intellectual framework for the design of therapies that mimic the serendipitous mutation and confer protection against the virus. Again, if people had not agreed to be tested and offered themselves as subjects for study, with no apparent benefit other than knowing they were contributing to scientific investigation, we could never have obtained this information. Commuting the death sentence of AIDS will be realized only if testing continues and more clinical data are obtained.

The ferment around breast cancer recalls the early days of AIDS: acute public awareness, increasing political pressure, the marshalling of research prowess and resources. It may take years or decades for researchers to come to understand the complex genetic underpinnings of breast cancer and to use this knowledge to design targeted ways of preventing or curing it. But that moment will arrive. And it will do so only as a result of the exploitation of clinical material: patients' blood cells and tissue biopsies and DNA.

So this was one reply to Karen's question of what she could do for herself—and, indeed, for her children, if they, too, had inherited the gene. I planned to encourage her to be an active participant in the fight by using her political skills to push society harder and faster to address her needs. I would ask her to enter our ongoing study of the clinical and psychological condition of women who have tested positive, allowing us to collect data on her medical course and on her functioning in the home and in the workplace. Studies on women like Ruth—those who have a BRCA2 mutation and a family history of breast cancer—will be vital to understanding the origins of the disease. Just as important are the insights that can be gained from the exceptions to the rule, as we determine why at least one in ten women with a BRCA mutation does *not* progress to cancer.

For a week, I anxiously anticipated Karen's return appointment. I had not been trained in medical school or during my clinical residency to handle the issues that confronted me. I had not been instructed by a senior attending physician in how to speak and listen, how to decide which questions are appropriate and which taboo, or how to make one's case for the best option.

Karen arrived promptly for her midday appointment. It came during the school lunch hour, and I noticed her sitting in the waiting room, grading papers and recording the scores in a large ledger she balanced on her lap. She greeted my secretary warmly, and entered my office with a polite smile.

Karen spoke first, evenly and strongly. "I'm going to have my breasts and ovaries removed."

I was stunned by the reversal.

"No, I'm not losing it, Jerry. And I will see a psychologist to explain my decision. The shrink will find me compos mentis."

"What changed your mind?"

"Not 'what'—'who' should be your question."

Karen explained that when she returned home and told her husband, Sam, of our discussion, he couldn't believe she hadn't decided to have the surgery. He said that he loved her deeply, that she would remain desirable, and that their marriage was resilient. Even so, she was undeterred. "He was speaking theoretically, the way you were last week about your facing what I am," Karen continued. "I know that both of you were trying your best to help and comfort. But neither of you can really see yourself in my place."

I agreed, and then I saw who could. "Ruth," I said.

Karen nodded. I recalled telling her that she was different from Ruth. "How different?" had been Karen's reply. Now Karen said, "She called me several times after the appointment, but I repeatedly put her off. I couldn't bring myself to discuss it. She was always the big sister, scouting out danger and steering me away. This time, I thought I had to deal with it myself, without her. But Ruthie wouldn't let it go."

Ruth came to the house Sunday morning, Karen said, and Sam took the kids out to McDonald's. The two sisters sat at the kitchen table over untouched cups of black coffee, and they talked.

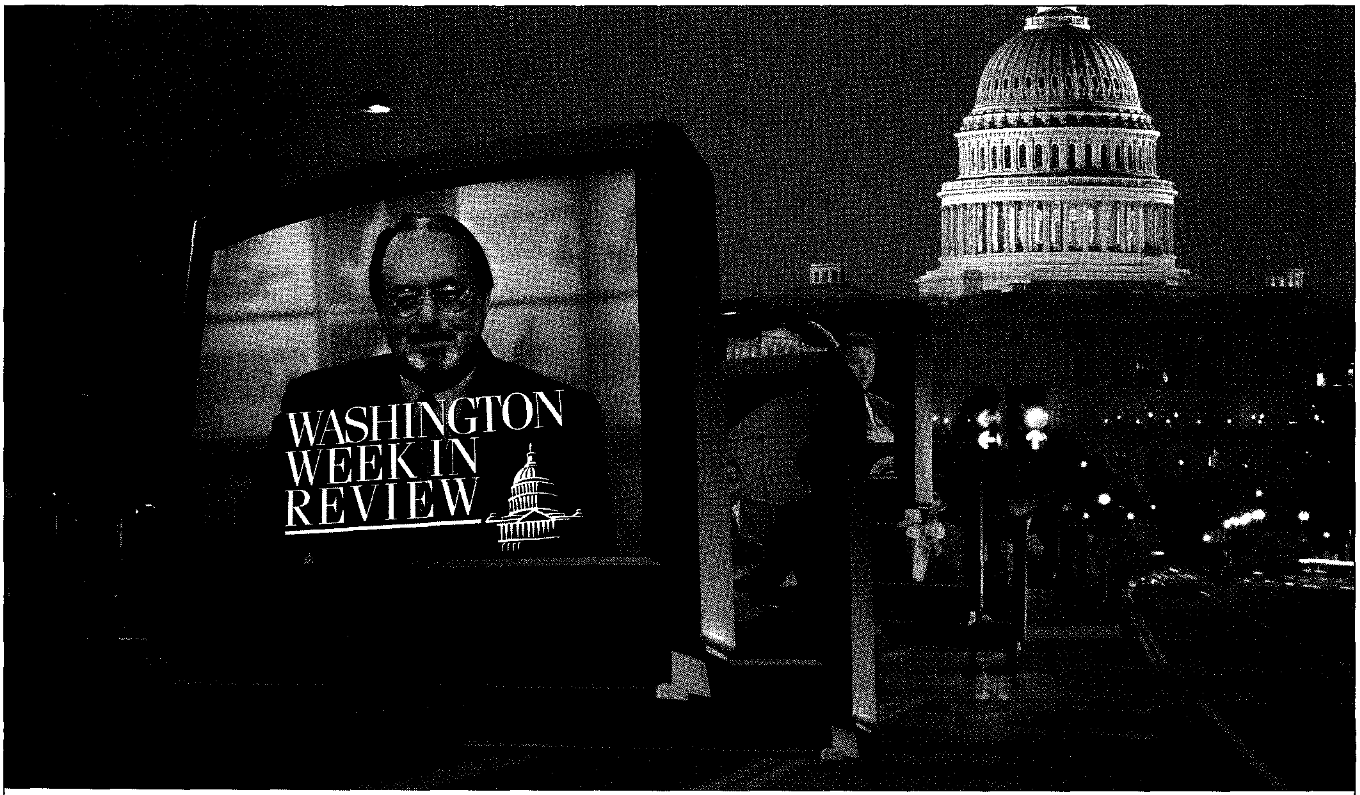
"Ruth said that I was one of the lucky ones," Karen went on, her eyes moist. "I had been given advance warning, by our mother and by her. That my relationship with Sam could survive any changes in my body, as hers had with her husband, despite the cancer and chemotherapy. And that I would never stop being who I am." Karen paused, and I reached out to grip her trembling hand. "Ruth said she wished someone had told her to have a mastectomy. Not just in hindsight, not just because now she has cancer. But because she would know that she had done everything possible to try to prevent it, and wouldn't live with regret." Almost in a whisper, Karen added, "I want so much to see my kids grow up. Ruthie doesn't think she'll see hers."

KAREN and Ruth both entered clinical and epidemiological studies in 1997—studies that will help us understand how to use the genetic information we have. But clinical testing and observation are only part of the solution. The laboratory is where the tools to disarm mutant BRCA genes in the next century will ultimately be developed.

Such research could eventually permit us to use genes like drugs, as a form of therapy. This concept of gene therapy has great appeal: it is targeted to the fundamental cause of the cancer, in contrast with what is brutally termed "slash, burn, and poison," meaning surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy. If the issue is a mutant gene, then block it and substitute its normal counterpart. There are still many formidable obstacles to achieving this goal—obstacles that will take years to overcome. No technology exists yet to deliver the healthy gene throughout the breast tissue and the ovarian tissue, to switch off the aberrant BRCA gene and make sure that the healthy one functions properly. But recent successes in locally bypassing blocked arteries in atherosclerosis and restoring immune function in inherited immune deficiencies by the use of gene therapy indicate that one day the technology will be developed to help families like the Belzes.

One last thought came to mind as I contemplated the uncertainties that patients like Karen would be facing. It had to do not with science or society in the future but with wisdom from the past. Karen began each school year discussing Greek mythology, Bible stories, and fairy tales, showing how they contained enduring themes that were to be the subjects of her course in modern literature. Within the legend of King David was a parable concerning his desire to know about himself. After learning everything that was within his ken, David had beseeched God to reveal to him the date of his death, so he could plan his life accordingly. God had answered that no man can know the time of his passing. David was to live with an acute awareness of his mortality, and in this way more wisely fulfill his life.

I had taken this tale at face value for many years, assuming that it spoke of God's omniscience as hidden from man, and on the fixed limits we face in trying to learn life's secrets. But recently I had been wondering whether there was another interpretation. Perhaps God did not inform David because God did not know; perhaps the date and circumstances of David's end were not determined. The hope that sustains us comes from the belief that our future is yet to be created, and is created in part by us. ♦



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ANNALS OF LAW

THE TROUBLE WITH SEX

Why the law of sexual harassment has never worked.

BY JEFFREY TOOBIN

ONLY a month ago, it would have been difficult to imagine a more luridly embarrassing accusation against a President of the United States than the one at the center of the case of Paula Corbin Jones v. William Jefferson Clinton. But that stew, however unsavory, was still simmering on what is known in Washington as the back burner. Then, on January 20th, the news broke of Monica Lewinsky's tape-recorded descriptions of her purported affair with the President. In a flash, the sexual pot boiled over, blew its lid, and left everyone in the kitchen scalded and dripping.

Jones claims that Clinton grossly propositioned her; Lewinsky has apparently said that Clinton asked her to lie under oath about their relationship. But the two sets of accusations have a good deal in common, beyond the fact that both allege spectacular sexual impropriety. They both emerge out of the law of sexual harassment—a legal area that has come to be invoked almost automatically whenever a case involves a sexual intrigue (real or imagined, consummated or thwarted) between two people at different levels of a chain of workplace command. In legal if not Biblical terms, Paula begat Monica.

As is demonstrated by the history of scandal from Helen of Troy to Monica of Beverly Hills, sex has a way of befogging the higher intellectual faculties; and, as is demonstrated by the prosperity of the legal profession, the law in general is not always a model of unambiguous clarity. Little wonder, then, that the legal doctrine of sexual harassment is mired in murk. And now that the murk is threatening to engulf the White House itself, the moment seems right to pause and examine just what the law is and how it got that way.

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination. Perpetrators discriminate against their victims—by punishing or threatening to punish them, directly or indirectly, if they don't submit sexually, or simply by making life so difficult that victims can't do their work. This may sound simple, but the doctrine of sexual harassment, in its relatively brief life, has become one of the most politicized areas in American law. As always, the law reflects the times. Sexual-harassment law came into being at a time of great change and uncertainty in relations between the sexes. But, like most laws, sexual-harassment law works best as a crude tool to deal with the most extreme and obvious cases. At other times, the result can be chaos.

No law, of course, can sort out the explosive relationships between men and women—not even in the relatively structured environment of an office. But in the nineteen-seventies the creators of the doctrine of sexual harassment, who had a clear political agenda as well as a legal one, thought otherwise. Their work blurred the difference between consensual sex and harassment, suggesting that sex between a woman and a man in the workplace almost inevitably entailed a form of coercion, generally from a man in a position of authority. For the first time, women could use the courts to fight an ancient form of oppression. But there was an unintended consequence of the emphasis on sexual advances as a form of discrimination. While feminists were arguing that there is no sex without harassment, the conservative judges who interpreted the law tended to respond that there is no harassment without sex. As a result, many judges have ruled against women who have suffered terrible mistreatment in the workplace—just not of an overtly sexual kind. As it stands now, sexual-harassment law can punish innocent parties and it can deny relief to women who have been discriminated against.

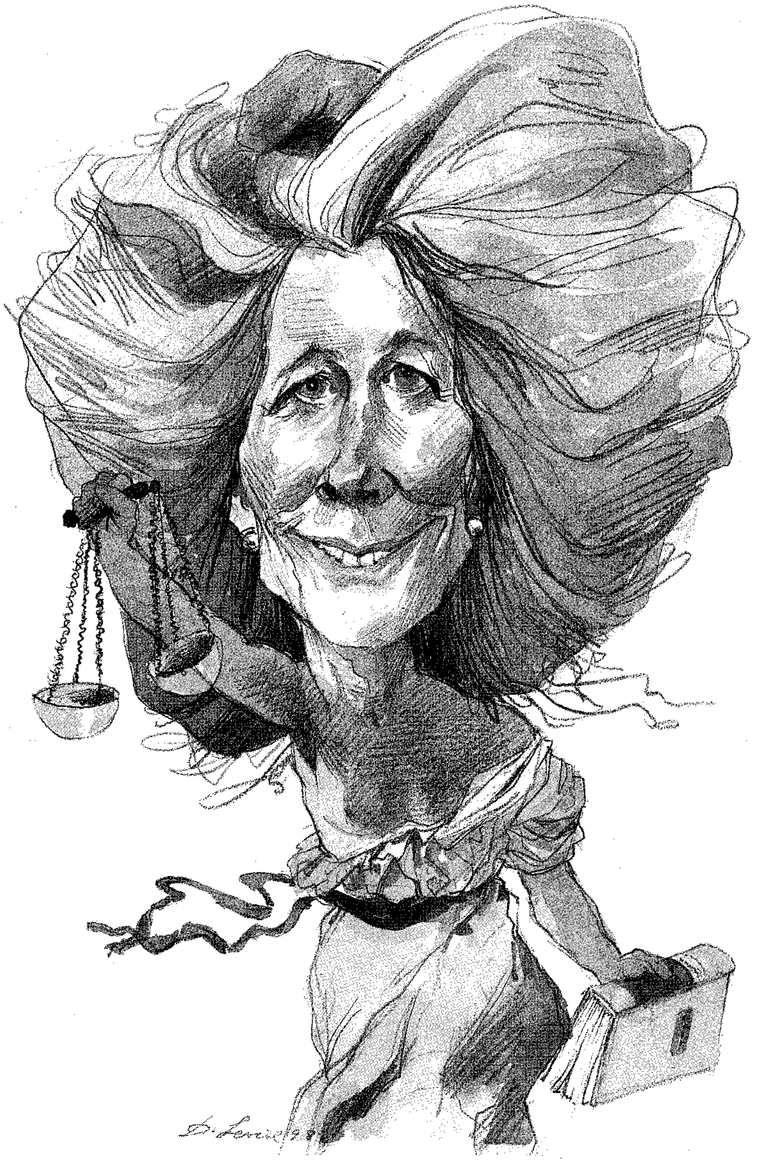
The Paula Jones case is a good example of the confusion engendered by sexual-harassment litigation. Is the law intended to protect women from sexual impropriety or from job discrimination? Jones's lawsuit rests almost entirely on the former proposition. Her case seems noticeably slim on evidence that she suffered any kind of professional setback as a result of her encounter with Clinton. The President's lawyers will shortly have their final chance to ask Judge Susan Webber Wright to dismiss Jones's case before it goes to trial. (That motion was originally due on March 13th, but last week the Clinton team asked Judge Wright to move up both this date and the start of the trial, which had been set for May 27th.) In essence, the President's motion for summary judgment will argue that even if Jones is telling the truth about what went on in Little Rock's Excelsior Hotel on May 8, 1991, those facts do not amount to sexual harassment because she wasn't fired or demoted or deprived of any benefits or promotions that were due her.

The Supreme Court has already decided to hear four sexual-harassment cases this term. On January 23rd, three days into the current scandal, the Court agreed to address perhaps the most important of them. A woman named Kimberly Ellerth says that she quit her job at Burlington Industries after a vice-president at the company made sexual advances toward her and threatened to hurt her chances at the company, although his threats were never carried out and she didn't complain to the company at the time. Can an employee sue for sexual harassment if she rebuffed her supervisor's advances but suffered no adverse consequences on the job as a result? The decision in this case may clarify—or further muddle—a critical area of the law.

It would be comforting to think that the focus of all the energy spinning out of the Jones case could create the pressure to channel the law in a more productive direction. To judge from how the story has unfolded so far, however, a bad situation seems about to get worse.

MODERN sexual-harassment law was invented by accident. During the debate over the Civil Rights Act of 1964, one of the leading reactionaries of the twentieth-century House of Representatives, Howard W. Smith, a Dixiecrat from Virginia, filed a last-minute amendment to try to kill the bill. Title VII of that act sought to ban racial discrimination in employment, and on February 8th of that year Smith rose in the House to propose that the act ban discrimination on the basis of sex as well as race. In his remarks in the well of the House, Smith suggested snidely that his amendment would protect the "right of every female to have a husband of her own" and "protect our spinster friends in their right to a nice husband and family."

"The Southerners thought if they could put sex in there, it would drag down the whole bill," Norbert Schlei, a senior official in the Justice Department at the time, told me recently. Schlei, who was in the House gallery on the day that Smith proposed his amendment, recalled, "They thought it was a joke. They didn't think there was any discrimination against women that mattered. They were laughing down on the floor as they were talking about it."



Catharine MacKinnon arrived at Yale at a pivotal time, and made it a laboratory for the application of the doctrine of sexual harassment.

DAVID LEVINE

But Smith's proposal drew an unexpected reaction from the few women who had seats in Congress at the time. Martha Griffiths, a Michigan Democrat, backed the amendment by the Virginia segregationist, and so did several other liberals. Following a brief but passionate debate, the Smith amendment came up for a vote, and it passed, 168 to 133. "Most of the people who voted for the amendment actually wound up voting against the whole bill, which Smith was trying to kill," Schlei said. "The part about sex never really got debated after that one day, and it wound up becoming part of the law. But the last thing Smith wanted to do was give women any rights."

Title VII came into being when the nation nearly went to war over race. Sex fit into the picture awkwardly, if at all. There were no clear and undeniable biological differences between the races, but there were plenty of differences between the sexes—the ability to get pregnant, for one—that the courts had to struggle to address under Title VII. Furthermore, the law changed at a time when relations between men and women were undergoing a volcanic upheaval. Women were not only pouring into the workforce in dramatically larger numbers; they were changing the social dynamics there, too. As more women arrived, there was still sexual harassment. But there was also sex, which was welcomed by some women as well as by some men. Above all, the coming of age of the baby boomers created a social and political transformation, and the legal system tried gamely to keep pace. Sorting all this out was a task of some subtlety—a task that Catharine MacKinnon decided to take on.

MACKINNON holds joint appointments at the law schools of the Universities of Michigan and Chicago. Tall, slim, regal in bearing, and possessed of a Sontag-style stripe of gray in a mane of reddish-blond hair, she has always been a provocateur, and has had a far more public and controversial career than most law professors. (In the early nineteen-nineties, when she was widely known as one of the country's most articulate and militant feminists, she was engaged to the Freud scholar Jeffrey Masson.) MacKinnon has no affection for reporters, since, she says, they have consistently misrepresented her work—especially her crusade against pornography, through much of which her comrade-in-arms has been the essayist and critic Andrea Dworkin. "It became extremely important to publish only defamatory statements about me," MacKinnon told me recently with some bitterness. "Some people have even said I didn't create the law of sexual harassment."

MacKinnon's ideas came very clearly from a specific time and place—New Haven in the mid-nineteen-seventies. Like Berkeley and Cambridge, the city had an unending supply of smart and motivated young people arriving every year. In 1970, one of those new arrivals was MacKinnon, who enrolled as both a graduate student in political science and as a student at Yale Law School. The politics of the time had a brittle edge in New Haven. In 1971, a rancorous trial of the Black Panther leader Bobby Seale on murder and kidnapping charges ended in a hung jury, and the aftermath of the case left a residue of suspicion between students and law-enforcement officials that lingered for years. In addition, the first women graduated from Yale College that year, and coeducation was met on campus with less than universal support. The passionately committed and endlessly energetic MacKinnon thrived in this volatile mix. Thanks to her, Yale would become a kind of laboratory for the invention and application of the doctrine of sexual harassment. (Coincidentally, three other pivotal figures in the history of sexual harassment—Bill Clinton, Clarence Thomas, and Anita Hill—were also law students at Yale during the nineteen-seventies.)

MacKinnon spent some seven years at Yale. She worked toward both a Ph.D. and a law degree, taught a series of undergraduate courses, created the first women's-studies course at the college, worked with unions, and co-founded a progressive collective in which she practiced law with a handful of like-minded young attorneys. In addition, she travelled around the country as a guitar-playing folksinger. According to MacKinnon, she learned at least as much from being on the road as she did in the classroom. "We were performing at all the women's centers, and they'd put us on their lists to get their newsletters," MacKinnon told me recently. "The only real thinking I was coming across in those days was in the newsletters. We did a music night at Cornell, and some time in 1975 we got a newsletter from the women's center there, and it had a story about a woman named Carmita Wood. She had been a secretary in a laboratory at Cornell, and her employer had been all over her sexually, and she quit. She applied for workers' comp, but they told her that since her reasons for leaving the job were 'personal' she wasn't eligible. The newsletter asked, 'Does anyone have any ideas for Carmita?' When I read that, my mind just went, This is it. It was an epiphany experience. Everything I had heard about what sex inequality is, is not it. This is it."

Of course, MacKinnon was not the first woman to recognize the phenomenon that came to be called sexual harassment. (The first use of that precise term seems to have been at a 1975 conference at Cornell when a group of feminists based in Ithaca held a "Speak-Out on Sexual Harassment.") A pioneering survey of working women which was published by *Redbook* magazine in 1976 raised the issue before a mass audience, and two years later an activist from Ithaca named Lin Farley wrote a book on the subject, entitled "Sexual Shakedown." But, in the mid-seventies, very few women successfully sued their employers under Title VII for sexual harassment they had suffered on the job. As in Carmita Wood's case, the courts said that sexual overtures from superiors were "personal," and did not constitute sex discrimination.

"The courts had said the ability to get pregnant was just a difference between men and women, and where there's a difference you can't have sex discrimination," MacKinnon explained. "I realized sexual harassment was really the same thing. It was a difference between men and women in their working lives. But these differences did not mean that sex discrimination could not exist. It was just the opposite. In these differences were the very essence of sex discrimination."

When MacKinnon had nearly completed a paper on sexual harassment which she was preparing for an independent-study course at Yale, she heard about a lawsuit at the federal appeals court in Washington that raised precisely the issues she was addressing. In Barnes v. Costle, Paulette Barnes, a clerk at the Environmental Protection Agency, had sued her employer under Title VII because, she said, her supervisor had retaliated against her for her refusal to sleep with him. The district court had dismissed her case on the familiar ground that the harassment was personal. MacKinnon gave a copy of her paper to a law clerk on the case in the federal appeals court, and, she claims, "it became the basis of the decision." In 1977, the three-judge panel on the case reversed the district court and produced, as MacKinnon later wrote, "the most explicit treatment of the issues to date and a holding that sexual harassment is sex discrimination in employment." (The late George MacKinnon, Catharine's father—and a conservative Republican—was one of the judges on the panel.)

MacKinnon turned the paper into a book, "Sexual Harassment of Working Women," which was published in 1979. Now in its twelfth paperback printing, it surely ranks as one of the most influential law books of the late twentieth century. (On February 27th, Yale will host a conference of sexual-harassment scholars marking the upcoming twentieth anniversary of its publication.) Dense, closely argued, and relentlessly polemical, MacKinnon's book is dedicated to the proposition that "sexual harassment, the experience, is becoming 'sexual harassment,' the legal claim." The book even includes a primer for lawyers to use in writing briefs to bring sexual-harassment cases under Title VII. MacKinnon defines two categories of sexual harassment. The first is "quid pro quo" harassment, which is, she writes, "the more or less explicit exchange: the woman must comply sexually or forfeit an employment benefit . . . 'put out or get out.'" The second category covers "hostile environment" cases, of which she writes, "Less clear, and undoubtedly more pervasive, is the situation in which sexual harassment simply makes the work environment unbearable."

DURING the late seventies and early eighties, MacKinnon's bottom line—that sexual harassment is a form of discrimination—was evolving into conventional wisdom. In 1977, Anne Simon, a member of MacKinnon's law collective, filed a lawsuit that forced Yale to establish guidelines for sexual harassment on campus—and nearly every university in the country eventually followed suit. Several other appellate courts adopted the reasoning of the Barnes v. Costle appellate decision, and in 1980 the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission issued the first comprehensive guidelines on gender-based harassment. Those guidelines defined such harassment in part as unwelcome "sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature." The women who were groped and humiliated in the "boom boom room" of Smith Barney's Garden City, New York, office—or the employees of Mitsubishi's Normal, Illinois, plant who say that their male superiors taped some women to factory carts and threatened to kill others during oral sex—have been, in effect, working from a template drawn by MacKinnon.

As the years passed, however, more judges and scholars came to regard the underlying basis of MacKinnon's position as idiosyncratic. In her book and in her subsequent work, including her writings on pornography, MacKinnon portrays men and women in a constant state of war—a war that the men are winning. MacKinnon has long argued that in a patriarchal society, the notion of consent has no real meaning for women. The real question, as she put it in her book, is "whether women have a chance, structurally speaking and as a normal matter, even to consider whether they want to have sex or not." In the light of the argument of her book, MacKinnon's question is clearly rhetorical. But her implication is clear: consent is a myth; all sex is harassment.

The courts would never go this far. Although they never adopted the extreme definition of all sex as harassment, they did deem sexual overtures to be the sine qua non of sexual-harassment claims. In case after case, judges rejected women's claims of sex-based discrimination unless they could prove that their male bosses made sexual advances or sexual remarks toward them. In one notorious 1982 case in Rhode Island, a judge dismissed a sexual-harassment claim even though male workers sabotaged a woman's projects, interfered with her efforts to do her job, and disparaged the efforts of women generally in the workplace. The court concluded that such conduct did not constitute "sexual harassment as that term has come to be defined." There had to be a sexual come-on if conduct was to be a violation of the law.

THE early debates over sexual-harassment law went on in the relative privacy of little-publicized court decisions and little-read law-review articles, but then came the epic Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee, in 1991, and the subject was introduced to the general public. The introduction, however, came in a very peculiar way. At the hearings, both Thomas's supporters and his opponents agreed that if Hill was telling the truth about what had occurred during her tenure as Thomas's assistant, the nominee was unquestionably guilty of sexual harassment. The Republicans who sponsored Thomas's nomination to the Supreme Court chose not to quibble about the definition of sexual harassment but, rather, just to attack Hill's version of the facts.

As a result, Hill's accusations became known as the paradigmatic case of sexual harassment. But, as many feminist scholars acknowledge today, the case against Thomas would have been a close one. His alleged requests for dates and his occasional bizarre sex talk may have amounted only to distasteful but legal office banter. In theory, Hill could have claimed that Thomas created a hostile work environment. But to do so she would have had to prove, as the Supreme Court put it in 1986, that Thomas went so far as to "alter the conditions of [the victim's] employment and create an abusive working environment"—a difficult task. Yet the distinction was never aired before the public during the hearings. The message that emerged was that risqué banter and suggestive overtures were what made harassment sexual. What mattered, it seemed, was the grossness of Thomas's conduct, and not his impact on Hill's ability to do her job.

In this way, then, the Thomas hearings may have made a case like Paula Jones's inevitable. Jones accused Governor Clinton of bad behavior. But would Clinton's alleged behavior have made Jones a victim of employment discrimination? In Jones's initial complaint, filed in May of 1994, she asserted that Clinton's solicitation served "to impose a hostile work environment" on her. Jones mentioned quid-pro-quo harassment in

that complaint, but she made a clearer claim of retribution in an amended complaint, which was filed in October of 1997. The amended complaint says that Jones was denied "appointments, benefits, advancements, raises [and] promotions . . . because she would not accede to Defendant Clinton's repeated solicitations of sex from her." (Clinton's lawyers will surely argue that, since Jones added the claim only last fall, it apparently took her more than six years to realize that she had been retaliated against.)

At first, Clinton's defenders took much the same tack as Thomas's supporters. In public, Robert S. Bennett, Clinton's lead lawyer, stressed that Jones's claims were simply false. There is a sign, however, that the magnitude of the Lewinsky disclosures has prompted Bennett to recast his approach. In view of Lewinsky's allegations, a jury may be more inclined to believe that Clinton did proposition Jones. So Bennett may be backtracking to a position that asserts that, even if Clinton did behave inappropriately, Jones suffered no legal harm. In the motion, filed last Monday, asking for an earlier trial date in the Jones case, Bennett wrote, "Paula Jones did not suffer any detriment at the hands of President Clinton; she cannot prove either *quid pro quo* or hostile environment sexual harassment; she cannot prove there was a conspiracy between Mr. Clinton and Trooper Danny Ferguson to deprive her of her civil rights; and she did not experience severe emotional distress as a result of anything President Clinton is alleged to have done to her." In this litany, Bennett conspicuously omits the defense's primary claim that Clinton did not proposition Jones. The irony is that such an approach may have been the right one all along. A proposition alone isn't—and shouldn't be—sex discrimination.

In Burlington Industries v. Ellerth, the case that the Supreme Court recently agreed to decide, the question presented is whether a woman is entitled to damages if she quits a company after a supervisor made sexual advances toward her but before she either submitted to them or suffered untoward consequences for refusing them. The case raises a fundamental question in sexual-harassment law: Should the law presume that a sexual advance causes harm or should it require some proof that a woman has suffered injury?

YALE, for its part, has just taken another look at questions of this sort. It has done so in the most difficult of contexts—regarding sex between teachers and students. Of course, the rules governing such relationships do not precisely duplicate those concerning employers and subordinates. Yale, in view of its quasi-parental role, took what seems to be, on the surface of it, a commonsensical step. Last November, the university officially banned all sexual relations between teachers and their students. But in a painful and public controversy over its sexual-harassment policy, Yale also discovered the difficulties of regulating consensual sex.

In January of 1996, a Yale freshman whom I will call Nancy Smith was unhappy at the school and was thinking of dropping out. She sought the advice of a resident dean in her dormitory, and in the course of her conversation with him she said that during her first semester at Yale, when she was seventeen, she had had an affair with her mathematics professor, Jay Jorgenson, which began after he started giving her special assistance in his class "Introduction to Differential Equations." Smith acknowledged from the start that she was a willing participant in any relationship she had with Jorgenson, but Yale launched a sexual-harassment investigation nonetheless. It was conducted by the Grievance Board for Student Complaints of Sexual Harassment, the same administrative body that the university had established in response to the feminist law collective's court victory of two decades earlier. The inquiry was especially tricky because Jorgenson denied that he had had any sexual relationship with Smith. So the members of the board recovered E-mail between Smith and Jorgenson from Yale's central computer and pondered the significance of a message by the professor which concluded "xoxoxo"; they interviewed Smith's roommates and discussed whether Jorgenson was the mysterious "Alan" who sometimes left phone messages; they asked, as the board put it in its final report, "if there were any physical characteristics that [Smith] could describe which would indicate that they had had an intimate relationship."

Ultimately, the board concluded that Smith and Jorgenson had indeed

ANTHROPOLOGY

SKIN & BONES

ON July 28, 1996, in Kennewick, Washington, two students stumbled over a human skull in the shallows of the Columbia River. Police were called in to investigate the potential homicide, and all the bones were turned over to James Chatters, a forensic anthropologist, for identification. The skull had distinct Caucasoid features—but, to his astonishment, the remains predated the arrival of Columbus by almost nine thousand years.

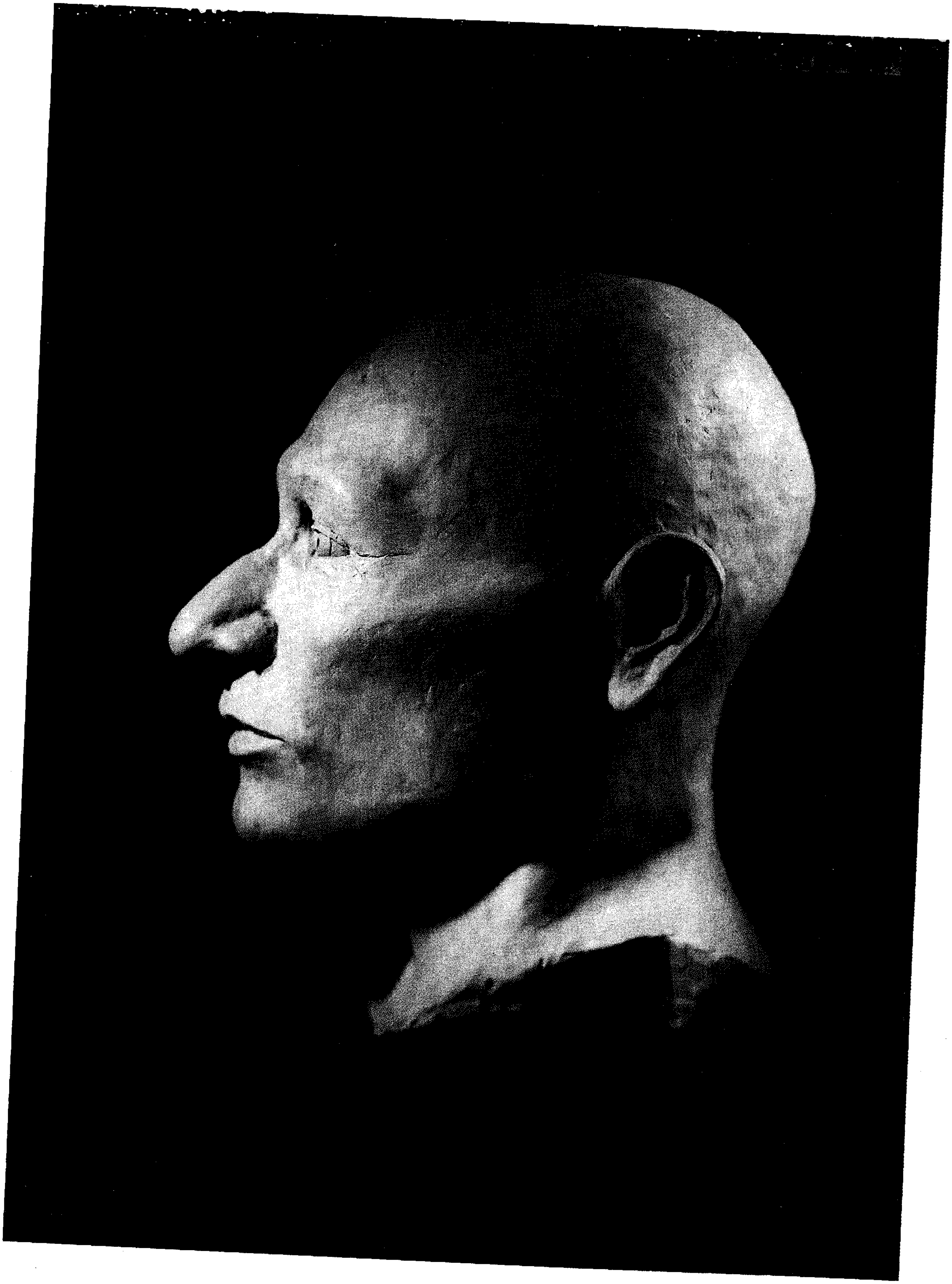
For the past three months, Chatters and the sculptor Tom McClelland have been reconstructing Kennewick Man's face from a cast of the skull. "My responsibility," Chatters said, "is to make sure he is scientifically and technically correct; Tom's is to give him humanity." This face, shown here for the first time, is what Kennewick Man's probably looked like when he was about thirty years old.

Chatters and McClelland first stuck little rubber markers onto the cast, indicating the theoretical depth of tissue in various parts of the face. They calculated the shape and size of the nose from nasal bones, and placed eyeballs in the sockets. Then, using clay, they modelled some thirty facial muscles and rolled the skin over them in strips, much like laying down a carpet.

Kennewick Man died when he was about forty-five to fifty, so they still need to age the face. And they plan to add one other quality: the drawn look of chronic pain. Chatters discovered that two muscle scars on the jawbone were exceptionally prominent, which he thinks was the result of maintaining a stoic expression through protracted physical suffering: the man's chest had once been crushed, and for months or years he had lived with a spearpoint embedded in his pelvis. This injury caused repeated infections, which may have killed him in the end.

"When his eyes meet mine," Chatters said, "it gives me the willies. He looks like he's about to speak. And he has an awful lot to tell us." —DOUGLAS PRESTON

Photograph by Max Aguilera-Hellweg



had sexual intercourse. But Richard H. Brodhead, the dean of Yale College and the ultimate arbiter in the case, didn't quite concur. In a letter to Jorgenson dated September 16, 1996, he wrote that the professor and student had had a "sexually-charged relationship," but he withheld final judgment on whether they had actually had sex with one another. Still, Brodhead concluded that "your conduct constituted sexual harassment, and it would have done so whether or not you and [Smith] engaged in sexual intercourse." The dean issued a "stern reprimand" for the professor's "deeply inappropriate" behavior.

In the fall of 1996, Smith returned for her sophomore year and discovered that the board had vindicated her and reprimanded Jorgenson, but that he was still teaching a class of undergraduates. "It wasn't my intention to ruin Jay's plans and his whole life and publicly humiliate him," she told me, "but I didn't think he should be teaching." So Smith talked to the Yale *Daily News*, and it broke her story on October 25th. The article, written by a student named Erin White, identified Jorgenson and withheld Smith's name (as I have done, following journalistic convention), but it quoted "the student" as saying, "I felt so betrayed, so used. . . . He's going to Ohio next year, and he's just going to cut his swath across campus there too." On the day the story appeared, Jorgenson checked into the psychiatric ward of St. Raphael's Hospital, in New Haven, where he remained for four days.

At the time Smith filed her complaint, Jay Jorgenson was thirty-two years old, held a Ph.D. from Stanford, and was a highly promising mathematician. He had written or collaborated on more than twenty scholarly papers, and he had accepted a tenure-track position at Ohio State University, which was to begin in the 1997 spring semester. Beyond his scholarly work, during his seven years as an assistant professor at Yale Jorgenson had earned a reputation as an extraordinary teacher. When news of the accusations broke, scores of faculty colleagues and students rushed to defend him publicly. Still, shortly after Ohio State learned of the reprimand by Brodhead, the university withdrew its offer to Jorgenson. He has sent applications to more than thirty universities but has received no other offers. When I met with Jorgenson, in New York, he was looking for a job in the financial sector. "As far as I am concerned, my academic career is over," he told me.

In response to the publicity stirred by the Jorgenson case, the provost of the university appointed a committee to revise and clarify the campus rules on sexual harassment. At the time, the rules had been somewhat ambiguous, prohibiting only such relationships between faculty and students as "unreasonably interfer[e] with an individual's work or academic performance or creat[e] an intimidating or hostile academic or work environment." In the new guidelines, which were issued last November, teachers are officially forbidden to have sexual relationships with students over whom they have or are likely to have a supervisory relationship—"regardless of whether the relationship is consensual." According to William Sledge, the professor of psychiatry who chaired the committee that drafted the new policy, "the trend in universities around the country is toward prohibiting all student-faculty sex." The reasoning behind Yale's new policy was nearly a word-for-word parsing of MacKinnon's almost two-decade-old work: "The unequal institutional power inherent in this relationship heightens the vulnerability of the student and the potential for coercion." Between students and their teachers at Yale, there is now, officially, no sex without harassment.

For better or worse, teachers have been sleeping with their students since the days of Plato; presumably, notwithstanding the new rules, they still occasionally will. Given the current punitive climate surrounding the subject of sexual harassment, professors who are found to be in these relationships can expect, like Jay Jorgenson, to have their careers destroyed. This will be even more true now that Yale and other universities are embracing categorical prohibitions on student-faculty sex. But it is worth pausing to consider the costs of policing consensual sex. They include expanding the university's responsibility for private, intimate conduct; they institutionalize the university's role as bedroom snoop; and, perhaps most important, they apply the rules of sexual harassment—a law that is supposed to concern discrimination—to what are often victimless crimes.

"*Let's just do the top layer.*"

THE frenzy of public interest in the details of Clinton's alleged encounter with Paula Jones (and his possible relationship with Monica Lewinsky) may still drown out any serious discussion of the real meaning of sexual harassment. But that would be too bad, because some of the most thoughtful and original work in the field of sexual harassment is going on right now. This work, too, is being done at Yale, in one of the turreted Gothic towers of the law-school building, but its focus and its emphasis differ considerably from those of the administrators who have just banned all faculty-student sex. In April of this year, a law professor named Vicki Schultz will publish a groundbreaking article in the Yale Law Journal entitled "Reconceptualizing Sexual Harassment," which is part of a large-scale reassessment of the law in light of the Thomas-Hill case. At the heart of her work is a deceptively simple idea. It is discrimination—not sex—that the law ought to be preventing.

Schultz, the forty-year-old daughter of a hairdresser and an Air Force enlisted man, has the manner of a pleasantly strict elementary-school teacher—friendly, almost bubbly, but with a noticeable aversion to cant and imprecision. Instead of clerking on an appellate court, she spent two years as a clerk on a federal district court, watching jury trials. Instead of writing appellate briefs, she spent three years trying civil-rights cases in the Department of Justice during the Reagan Administration. Schultz told me that her experiences "gave me a fundamental interest in and respect for facts. If you want to understand how a law works, you can't just look at what the Supreme Court or any court is doing but how it actually works in the real world."

Schultz researched sexual-harassment law for four years, and she learned that it was not functioning successfully in the real world. Her critique doesn't fit into any clear ideological pigeonhole. She devotes a substantial part of her article to debunking the notion that there is no sex without harassment. "By focusing on sexual advances as the quintessential harassment, the paradigm encourages courts to extend protection to women for the wrong reasons," she writes. "Rather than emphasizing the use of harassment law to promote women's empowerment and equality as workers, it subtly appeals to judges to protect women's sexual virtue or sensibilities." Schultz argues that sex is a right—and a responsibility—that women themselves must decide how to exercise.

Yet Schultz also demolishes the claim that there is no harassment without sex. Such a view, she writes, seriously understates the amount of real sexual discrimination in the work place: "Much of what is harmful to women is difficult to construe as 'sexual' in design." She told me, "The focus of harassment law shouldn't be on sexuality as such. We should worry more about making sure women have opportunities in the workplace and less about regulating who sleeps with whom. We can't pretend that all sexual interaction is nonconsensual, and we shouldn't try to stop sexual interaction that really is consensual."

Unlike most law-review articles, Schultz's is full of actual stories having to do with working women. She quotes a welder from Mary Walshok's 1981 book, "Blue-Collar Women," who said, "It's a form of harassment every time I pick up a sledgehammer and that prick laughs at me, you know. It's a form of harassment when a journeyman is supposed to be training me and it's real clear to me that he does not want to give me any information whatsoever." Schultz describes the case of Margaret Reynolds, an electrician who was appointed sub-foreman of a crew at the Atlantic City Convention Center. Her male subordinates would not work with her and laughed while she unloaded heavy boxes. She endured verbal abuse and obscene gestures. A union official refused to arrange for locks to be put on the shower that she and another woman on her work crew used. When the Miss America Pageant came to town, an exhibitor asked that Reynolds be removed from the floor—"Apparently the incongruity between the images of the pageant contestants and the tradeswomen was too much for the exhibitor," Schultz observes—and Reynolds was replaced by a male co-worker. She lost her hostile-work-environment claim, because, the court said, in essence, "Not enough sex."

What Schultz is doing is returning sexual harassment to its roots as an anti-discrimination law. She points out that whether or not Margaret Reynolds' superiors sexually harassed her, they discriminated against her because of her gender—and that's what should really matter. Women have always been able to sue under Title VII, claiming discrimination in hiring, firing, and promotions; that's called "disparate treatment." But courts have been slow to find hostile work environments except when women were subject to explicitly sexual treatment. "What I'm trying to do is go back to the fundamental recognition of why there was a law of hostile work environment in the first place—the notion that one can be discriminated against in the atmosphere in which one works," Schultz says. "The hostile environment may include sexual advances, but they're not necessary. Sexuality isn't the only tool of discrimination," she says.

But as unions and businesses have begun to devise ways to address the problem of sexual harassment, Schultz fears that some of the remedies show just how badly people misconstrue it. "I recently heard that there is a training program for masons near New Haven where they are teaching the men what they call the 'five-second rule,'" she told me. "That means that men are not allowed to look at a fellow-worker who is a woman for more than five seconds because to do so might be sexual harassment. But that's a form of discrimination itself—trying to set women off in a category so that you can't even look at them. That's not what women care about."

Schultz's reassessment of the law is no panacea. No set of legal standards will obviate the need to make difficult judgments about individual behavior. But that may ultimately be the most important point of all. Human sexuality combines, among other things, passion, nuance, irrationality, and lust. Any attempt to purge sexuality from any part of human life—including the classroom, the courtroom, and the factory floor—is doomed to failure. The legal system, it seems, would do better simply to try to measure real and identifiable harms. It is hubris to think that this most baffling realm of life can be regulated with much precision or fairness. Sexual-harassment law will never end the battle of the sexes. Perhaps it will help make sure that women can do their jobs in peace. That's hard enough. ♦

PORTFOLIO

CELEBRITY'S MIDWIFE

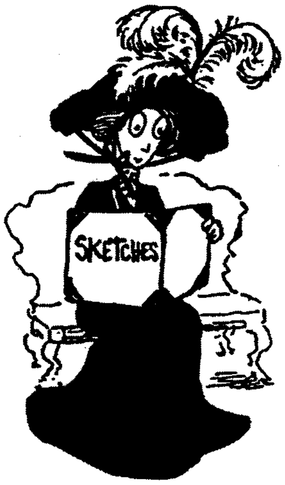
The lost work of Kate Carew.

BY CHRISTOPHER SILVESTER

IN the fall of 1900, Mary Chambers, a young artist living in New York, was casting about for a way to supplement the income of her husband, a newspaperman. At the suggestion of a friend, she decided to show the boys down on Park Row what she could do. She went to the opening-night performance of "Richard Carvel," starring John Drew, and, that same night, dashed off caricatures of the actor, wrote a cheeky paragraph about him, and delivered them both to the city room of Joseph Pulitzer's New York *World* at 2 A.M.

The ploy worked. Her first caricatures appeared in the paper's September 15th evening edition, billed as "First of a Series of Saturday Studies of Stage Celebrities." A few years later, Chambers wrote in *Pearson's* magazine, "I awoke to find myself pseudonymously famous. The alias with which I had signed the sketches—I had selected it at random—shouted at me from advertisements and posters, and 'The Only Woman Caricaturist' was flaunted before the public with a persistence which made me thank my stars I had not signed my real name." The alias she had chosen was Kate Carew. It is a name that few readers today will recognize, but from 1900 until 1920 Kate Carew was famous on both sides of the Atlantic as a beloved link between celebrity and the public. Then Chambers abruptly stopped working, and the fame of Kate Carew quickly waned. None of her work has ever been republished until now.

The artist was born Mary Williams, in 1869, in Oakland, California. Her father, Robert Neil Williams, was a mining engineer working in the Sierra Nevada when his wife, Virginia, gave birth to Mary. (Their last child, Gluyas, became one of *The New Yorker's* greatest cartoonists.) Mary graduated with honors from the San Francisco School of Design and opened a drawing studio. Ambrose Bierce, who was then working at the San Francisco *Examiner*, William Randolph Hearst's flagship paper, paid a visit to the studio and was so impressed with her work that he introduced her to his editors. In 1889, the *Examiner* took her on as one of seventeen staff illustrators, and Mary thrilled to the demands of the job. She later told an interviewer, "I enjoyed watching people, getting their character by talking informally to them. Especially was I fond of my assignments to cover prisoners—there were so many interesting types."



A self-portrait of "Aunt Kate," above, and, opposite, her 1919 drawing of D. W. Griffith with Lillian and Dorothy Gish.

MARY married Harrie Kellett Chambers, a bohemian journalist from Sydney whom she had met at the *Examiner*, and by 1900 they were living in New York. It was then that she turned to theatrical caricature, and found fame. She later wrote that her impressionistic drawing style was "quite an accident—and the outcome of haste," since her sketches had to reach the paper's editorial offices in time for the first edition. "So, I tried eliminating all non-essential lines and dots," she explained. "On the way home in a hansom cab, I kept my eyes closed to exclude other pictures, and did the caricature from memory."

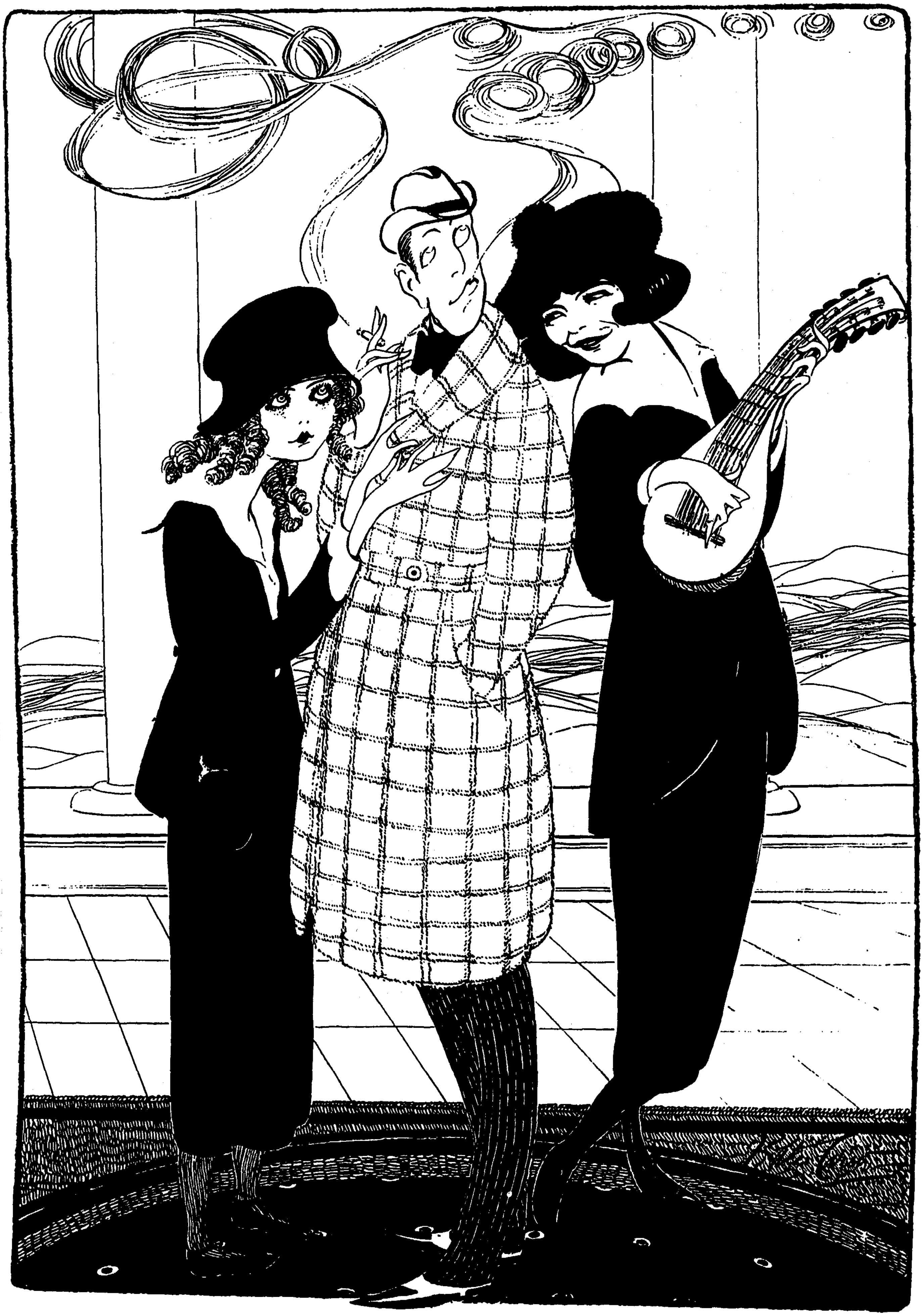
Soon after Chambers was signed up by the *Evening World*, she was commissioned to do full-page illustrated interviews for the Sunday paper. Almost always these illustrations contained a self-portrait of "Aunt Kate" in the act of drawing. At first, Aunt Kate appeared schoolmarmish, with a pointed chin, a hat, and a coat that skirted her ankles. In later years, she grew younger: her severe expression became a chirpy one, and her hat was more stylish—a lampshade with white fur trim.

The first of Chambers' interviews—with Mark Twain—appeared on October 21, 1900. Interviews followed with the Tammany Hall politician Richard Croker; the Chinese Ambassador, Wu Ting Fang; and Sarah Bernhardt, of whom she wrote:

> In grasping my hand she held her own close to her side, and the action was one of pulling me gently toward her. You cannot imagine anything more confiding than Mme. Bernhardt's handshake. It is a work of genius.

An attempt to interview J. P. Morgan misfired, although she did manage to invade his office and come away with enough material for a caricature and an impudent description of the encounter. ("Mr. Morgan uttered an inarticulate roar, sprang from his seat and fled.") She was then granted an interview by Charles (Million-Dollar-a-Year) Schwab, who told her that he had kidded Morgan about her tale of penetrating his sanctum.

In the summer of 1901, the *Sunday World* sent Chambers to Europe, and she sent back caricatures for a series called "Kate Carew Abroad," which included studies of Winston Churchill and Émile Zola. The following year, Chambers made her first trip to Washington, where she met President Theodore Roosevelt,

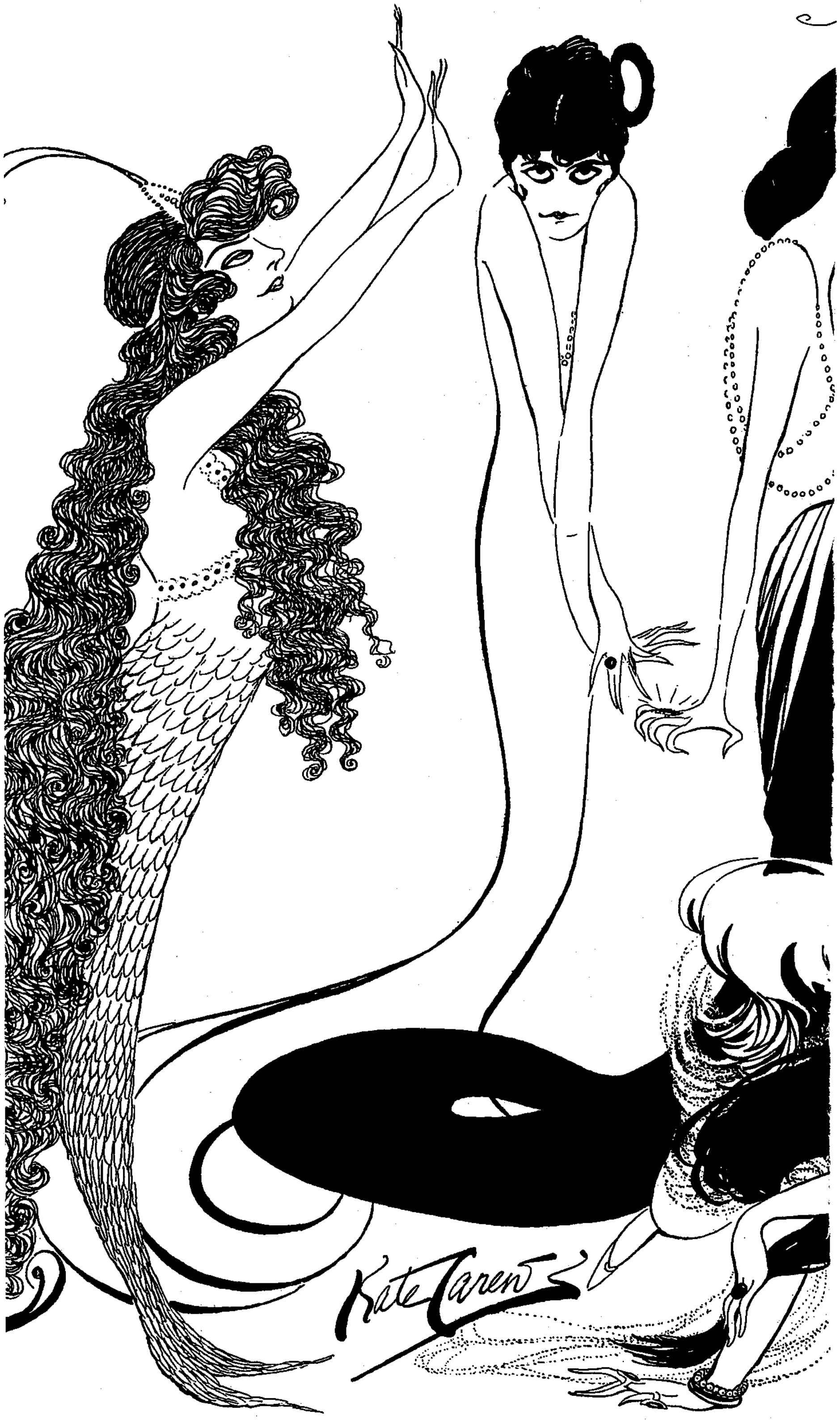


but was not granted a full interview. "All he said was 'De-lighted!'—a phrase that has since become a popular symbol of the presidential cordiality—but he was worth a page to me, just the same," she later recalled. Returning to New York, she interviewed William Butler Yeats, and noted:

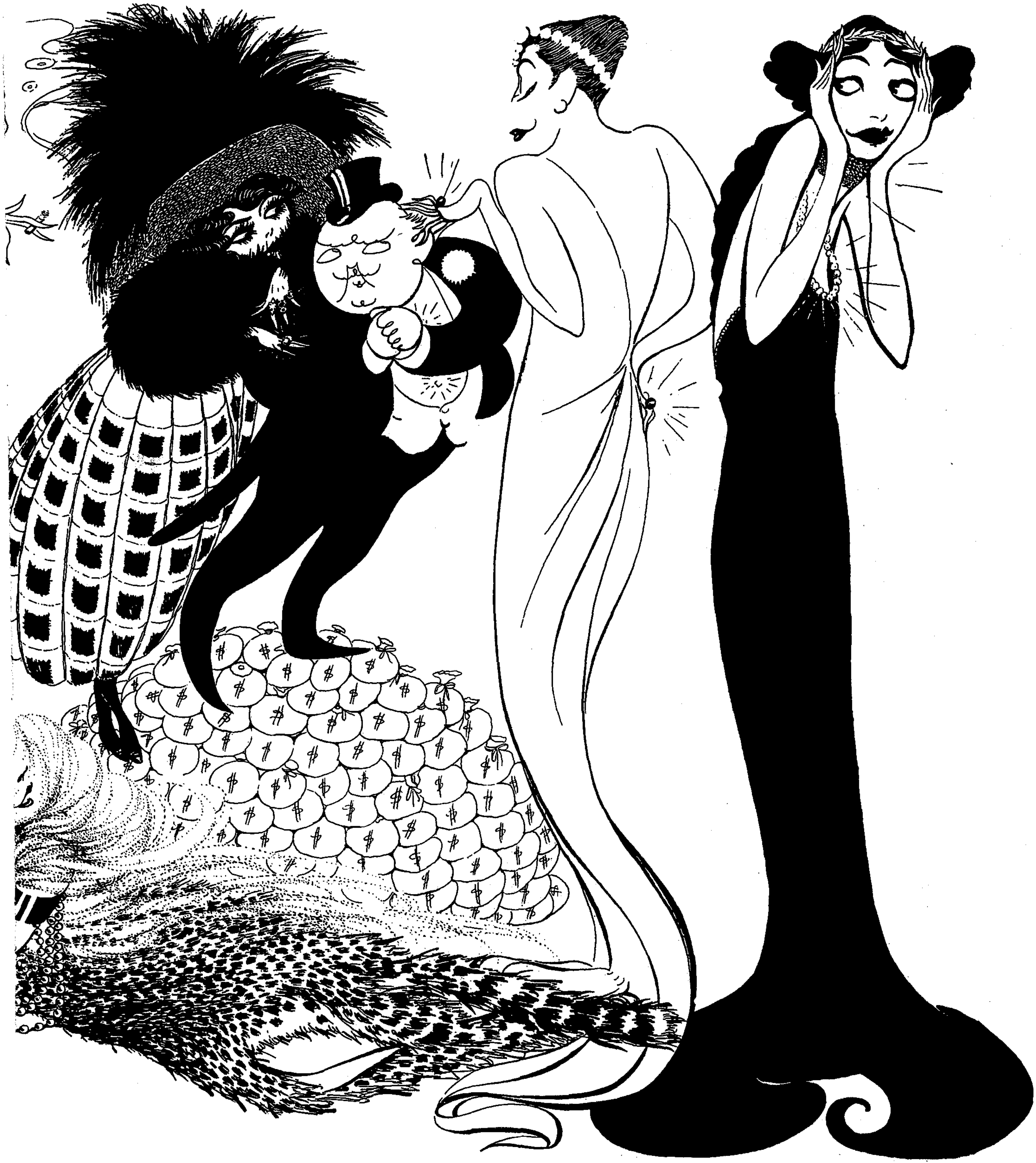
> Mr. Yeats was not in the least like the picture I had imagined of a young Irish poet, symbolist, patriot, mystic and believer in fairies. No, no! I don't mean that he was short and fat and had cropped hair and looked like a tradesman—not a bit of it! In fact he was by far the tallest man I had seen that day. . . . Very much alive, nimble of intellect, eager in controversy, playful in humor, incapable of pose—he was all this at a glance. The mysticism lay deeper.

A DEVOTED Anglophile—in part because she believed that the English understood cartoons better than the Americans—she moved to London in 1911, after her marriage had failed, and later drew for *The Patrician* and *The Tatler*. Then the First World War started, and Chambers returned to California, where she married an Englishman named John Reed, who had followed her there. She took a studio near the beach, in Carmel, and continued to do special drawings for *The Tatler* and its pictorial offshoot, *Eve*, including studies of such luminaries of the infant motion-picture industry as Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, D. W. Griffith, and the Gish sisters. By the end of 1920, however, detailed black-and-white penwork had become a strain on her eyes, and she was forced to abandon caricature. She died in 1960, at the age of ninety-one.

If the originals of any of the hundreds of Kate Carew caricatures exist, their whereabouts are unknown. Had Chambers continued sketching, her fame might never have dimmed. She once noted that the trouble with drawing caricatures for the mass press was that most of her readers didn't know what her subjects looked like, "and there is not much fun in making caricatures for people who have never seen the caricatured." Some of her last drawings were of silent-movie stars, but those stars began to fade in the public imagination not long after she herself retreated into the shadows. The burgeoning cinema of the twenties and thirties would bring a greater intimacy between the public and a new type of celebrity. As Kate Carew, Mary Chambers was one of the midwives of that peculiarly modern invention. ◆



Left to right: Silent cinematic vamps Annette Kellerman, Theda Bara, Gera



ar, Fannie Ward, a moneybags victim, Valeska Suratt, and Pauline Frederick, with Alla Nazimova reclining in the foreground.

PERSONAL HISTORY

THE GOOD BAD GIRL

Karla Faye Tucker—the Miss Tough Guy from Texas who became the Belle of the Bible Belt—is scheduled to be executed this week. The author, a friend and biographer, had a final meeting.

BY BEVERLY LOWRY

JANUARY 20, 1998, and I'm driving up I-35 again, from Austin straight north to Temple, then west on 36 to Flat and on to Gatesville, where the Mountain View prison is. Karla Faye Tucker has become a celebrity since I last saw her. Bianca Jagger has made a visit. Delegates from the European Parliament have requested one. Karla Faye's been in the news magazines, and there has been a protest in her behalf in Rome. She's given interviews on "60 Minutes," "Larry King Live," "Charles Grodin," "Court TV," and Pat Robertson's "The 700 Club" (her favorite). Prison guards are complaining. It's a circus, they say. And Karla Faye's become, in what may be her last two weeks on earth, a media star.

For the past few days, central Texas has been glorious, the sky as blue as a boy baby's first blanket, the soft sun making long, bony shadows of the leafless trees. But the weather shifted today, to a surly gray. Scrub oaks make arthritic gestures toward a cloudy sky. When I stop for gas, the wind slings strands of hair into my eyes. Prison weather. Glum, giving nothing.

Mountain View is the State of Texas's maximum-security unit for female inmates, but there are no mountains anywhere in the vicinity, and not much of a view. One section of Mountain View is set aside for death row, where seven condemned women live and wait. Nobody thought that there would ever be as many as seven women on the row. Every time I come to the prison, I look for some sign of change. But nothing much happens. A new building, some flowers, a paint job. A few years ago, the "Slow—Children" traffic signs were changed to "Caution—Children Playing." This time, there's a picnic table under a scrub oak with a sign nearby designating a smoking area for prison employees only. Tobacco is now banned from Texas prisons, and the prohibition yields to no exceptions. A condemned man can't take a final smoke. The law's the law, after all.

The gatehouse, through which all visitors and employees pass before entering the prison grounds, sits behind double chain-link fences topped by razor wire. There are no instructions on how to get in. You stand there and wait. When the guard notices, a buzzer sounds. Inside the gatehouse, everything is the same as the first day I came here. On a bulletin board are snapshots of big, low-slung American cars for sale, small houses for rent. There's an Employee of the Month announcement, and hand-lettered slips of paper advertising garage sales. Guards in tight-fitting pants leave their car keys at the front desk. Many carry lunch sacks and large thermos bottles. They nod at me as I pass.

In the parking lot, people are unloading video equipment from two big vans: cameras, mikes, reflectors, backdrops. From their clean-shaven, happy faces, I recognize these folks as Pat Robertson Christians. They smile the way Pat Robertson does—all the time. They are members of Robertson's 700 Club, come to interview Karla Faye after me.

David Nunnelee, a public-information officer for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, calls my name, and we shake hands. I met Nunnelee in 1989, when I went to the men's prison in Huntsville to interview Karla's partner in crime, Danny Garrett. Texas's death chamber is in Huntsville, but Garrett was never executed. In 1993, he died in prison, of liver disease.

I ask Nunnelee when Karla will be transported to Huntsville.

He shrugs. "Maybe a couple of days, maybe a couple of hours, I don't know." He gives a sardonic little snort. "One thing's for sure. They won't tell me."

I walk past the buzzing double gates, accompanied by two pleasant female guards, to the same visiting room, where I'm meant to sit in a plastic chair and have what may be my last visit with Karla Faye Tucker. On February 3rd, two weeks from today, the State of Texas is scheduled to kill her by lethal injection. She'll be the first woman executed in the state since 1863, when Chipita Rodriguez was hanged from a hackberry tree in San Patricio for killing a horse trader.

IN March, 1986, the Houston *Chronicle* published a front-page story about Karla Faye, accompanied by a color photograph of her in prison whites, cupping her chin in her hand. The headline was "ON DEATH ROW, PICKAX MURDERER FINDS A 'NEW LIFE.'" It told about the murders, the nightmare weapon, the grisly details, the trial, Karla's confession, and her splashy comments about sex. "I come with every stroke" was what she had told a friend afterward. On the stand, her sister Kari testified that Karla had told her that every time she "picked" her victim she "got a nut," and hit him again. In any story written about Karla, she is always referred to as the "pickaxe murderer." And the fact is that one hot Houston morning, on June 13, 1983, she did help kill a man and a woman, and she used a pickaxe on both of them. Karla and Garrett had put more than forty holes in their victims by the time they were done.

The article told the story of her life—marijuana at eight, heroin at ten, turning tricks at thirteen—and then went on to describe her conversion to Christianity four months after she'd been arrested. She had, one lawyer claimed, left behind the version of herself which he regarded as "the personification of evil" and had become someone new, a person who was being described as good and sweet and as loving as a puppy. Even prosecutors were speaking up for her. And Rebecca Lewis, the chaplain of the jail where Karla was first imprisoned, who is someone well acquainted with the dodges employed when “playing church,” had testified as a character witness on Karla’s behalf. It was the first time the chaplain had offered such testimony.

But it was the photograph that captured my attention. Sometimes I stood and stared at it for minutes at a time. I couldn’t imagine how anybody could have committed such merciless, unthinkable acts and, less than four years later, look as she did now. There was—I don’t know how else to describe it—an old-fashioned sense of goodness about her. She was pretty, alert, warm. More than anything, she looked calm. I envied that calm.

TEXAS
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1984

Tucker at twenty-one: passion, parties, and very hard-living. And Tucker three years later: a devout follower of Jesus Christ.

My son, Peter, had been dead five and a half years. The story of my friendship with a confessed murderer starts with my son, knocked mindless by a car—or truck, I do not know—on the shoulder of a Texas highway, a victim of a “hit-and-run accident,” not far from our family home. He lived for about eight hours, then died. It might have been a deliberate hit, or it may have been an accident that ended up as a deliberate act. The driver may not have intended to hit the young man on his way home, but, once he did, fear set in and he floored the accelerator and escaped. I don’t know how it happened; it happened. And in December, 1988, when I could not stop looking at the newspaper picture of the lovely young woman with the dark rolling hair and the soft brown eyes, I knew then that death was my subject. It had become the only thing that interested me. What did I have to lose, making a trip to visit a woman on death row? I met a condemned murderer because Peter had been killed.

I met her in this same visiting room. It was March, 1989, the day as hot as summer. I had no plan then to write a book about her. I knew what she’d done, and that the day might come when she, too, would be killed, and since I’d already lived through one unthinkable death the prospect of inviting another one into my life seemed—I knew this, without giving the fact much weight—a little crazy. But then I spotted her coming up the sidewalk with a guard on either side, and watched how both guards—one man, one woman—leaned in to her as she talked and laughed at something she said. I saw the obvious if improper affection between guards and prisoner, and my heart sank.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, women love women. Women love to love other women. Men are a sticker patch women have to run through, between one female encounter—a meeting, a conversation—and the next. In that cold, walled-off setting, surrounded by cold, walled-off people, Karla Faye threw her head back and guffawed—a hearty, full, genuine body-shaking guffaw—and I could see her direct, uncompromised, highly sexual charm. And maybe, too, I was ready to be seduced. Maybe I was a jailhouse groupie, looking for a jump start to my life, enchanted by the notion of falling in love with a woman who had killed and would be killed. Or maybe I was just lonely and wanted to start over with somebody who hadn’t been through the past awful years with me. Whatever the many causes, I fell for Karla, as, I would subsequently learn, did many others: the cop who arrested her, the prosecutor who convicted her, the corrections officers and so many of the other dead-solid law-enforcement folk. Even Pat Robertson, Mr. Death Penalty himself.

I came at one o’clock that time, the same as today. Prison officials weren’t strictly limiting media visits then, except to fit them in between meals. And so I stayed until four. A guard sat leaning back in a chair, overseeing our visit. Karla and I were separated by a window of Plexiglas. At three, there was a shift change. A new guard came in. Karla told me about the murders. When she had finished, she asked me about my life and the death of my son.

Karla read the drafts of the book I did write about her. It was called “Crossed Over,” and it was published in 1992. During the writing of it, Karla and I corresponded, talked, wrestled with differences of opinion, made our way through some uneasy stretches. Her family was angry at her for talking to me. They’d had more attention than they could stand already, and they resented her for making harsh comments about her mother. A grandmother said Karla didn’t have that bad a childhood and she should stop saying she did. Back then, an execution seemed a far-off possibility; back then, they wanted her simply to shut up. Or so it seemed to me.

David Nunnelee delivers me to the visiting room. Karla has arrived before me and holds her arms up in a wide V, as if inviting me in. Smiling, without a worry to stir her thoughts. “I am so glad to see you,” she says. She holds her army-green padded prison jacket. When she was younger, she dislocated her shoulder diving from an eighty-two-foot cliff, and she sometimes uses the jacket as a cushion to lean on. I have never thought of Karla Faye as beautiful. Pretty, yes. With a lucky bone structure. But today there is a new quality about her, an utter aliveness. She has become, since I saw her last—more than a year ago—unreservedly beautiful. Her face is thinner, and I tell her so, but she says that maybe her face is but, really, she’s fat. “Every night, I eat and go straight to bed, and it’s showing up here.” She pats her behind. She's also learned how to wear her makeup. She used to doll up her face a little too energetically, with an overly careful line under her lower lashes and rouge on her cheeks.

I tell her I think she's grown up. She shrugs and lifts both hands palms up. "Well," she says, and makes a face. "You grow up." The answer is glib. There was a time when we never allowed each other to be glib. Our conversations ranged all over the place. Late in my first visit, when time was running out, we talked about what kind of punishment would be appropriate for the crime she had committed. Was there one? Karla felt that what she had done was so terrible that she probably deserved to die. I disagreed, and took a stand against the death penalty, and so she asked me what I would do if they found the person who had hit Peter and he'd said, Yes, yes, he'd done it, he killed him, but he was good now, he'd changed. How would I feel? I didn't know.

We talk about the attention; as we speak, the 700 Club is setting up its equipment. "It's getting exciting," Karla says, and at first I think she's talking about the excitement of getting close to her execution date, but gradually I realize she's talking about something else, what she calls "the bigger picture." The picture beyond herself. "I think we're going to reach a lot of people," she says. This use of "we" is new, and it makes me uncomfortable. Karla, though, is irrepressible. "And when I see all the people coming together on this thing," she continues, exuberant, "no matter what their belief or religion is, I tell you . . ." She shakes her head and her long hair flies. "It blesses my socks off!"

Since early December, when it became clear that Karla was down to her last United States Supreme Court appeal, the news stories have been pretty much nonstop. One continuing question has been: Are Texas men too chivalric and old-fashioned to execute a woman?

"THE Sweetheart of Death Row," David Nunnelee called Karla Faye in 1989. And when Karla made her first network-television appearance—on "60 Minutes," last December—many, seeing her for the first time, saw just that: the sweetheart. But I saw something different. Karla used to trade on a kind of girlish quality, fluttering when she talked, dipping her chin and ducking her head. She was and knew how to be "adorable." But she was also someone who was trying to learn to be someone better, more educated, more forthright. For her thirty-eighth birthday, last November 18th, I sent her an American Heritage dictionary. We used to correspond about how people from the South and from Texas—especially women—were brought up to think that smartness didn't do much for anybody if it showed. In prison, she had become a reader, and on television she had a new confidence—an ease with words, an ability to look straight into the camera.

After "60 Minutes," a pro-death-penalty friend of mine from Memphis called me. He still believed in the death penalty, he said. And he paused.

But?

"I can't stand it if they kill Karla Faye."

I HAVE a lot of photographs of Karla and her family and friends, which I once kept pinned on a bulletin board on the wall in front of my desk. I used to study those pictures, trying to wheel the different versions of Karla into focus. The pictures were in chronological order: her mother at seventeen, her mother and father as newlyweds, baby pictures. Then childhood, the Miss Tough Guy adolescence, a short marriage, Karla and her sister with a john on New Year's, her sister whacked out on drugs, Karla with Danny Garrett, Danny in sunglasses, strumming a guitar. The jailhouse photos showed the softer Karla. On the far end of the bulletin board I hung Xeroxed copies of the autopsy photographs of Jerry Lynn Dean and Deborah Thornton, lying in metal trays, their bodies dotted with pickaxe wounds, which looked to me like cockroaches crawling on their white skin.

Karla Faye was born in 1959, in Houston. Her father, Lawrence Earl Tucker, worked as a longshoreman on the ship channel in Houston, and her mother, Carolyn Moore, was a very pretty secretary—an executive secretary, Karla used to say, to make sure I knew her mother was special. But I never completely trusted Karla's take on her mother. Until recently, Karla was always trying to turn Carolyn Moore into a good mother, even when remembering that she had taught Karla to use what she had, to please men and give sex for money. (At fourteen, Karla was taken by her mother to "a place with lots of men," so that she could be schooled in the art of being a call girl. "I wanted to please my mother so much. I wanted her to be proud of me.") "My mother and I were really close," Karla used to say. "We used to share drugs like lipstick."

There were three girls: Kathi, then Kari, then Karla, in quick succession. Carolyn Moore may have meant to be a good wife. She may have loved Larry Tucker as much as she seems to be loving him in the picture I have of them as newlyweds, cuddling on a couch. But her feet got itchy fast, and Karla is a love child: she learned of her real father, a Greek fireman, when she was thirteen. The first time she looked in the mirror, she now says, she knew she was different from the rest of her family. Her sisters are soft, pale, with their mother's blue eyes and overbite—there's a drifty look about both of them. Karla has dark skin, brown eyes, black hair, cut short because it's wild and won't tame. She's thin, boyish, bowlegged, and you can sense the energy in her in every shot—there is an unwillingness, maybe an inability, to sit still for the picture. She's a child with definition, a girl of passion, no drift about her.

When her parents divorced, Larry Tucker was awarded custody, but the girls wanted to be with the woman they called Mama Carolyn, because she lived an exciting life, and they wanted to, too. By then, her mother was doing what Karla called "working on the telephone." She had become what a friend of Karla's described as a "high-dollar whore," and was pals with bad cops and dope pushers and rock-and-roll musicians.

At the age of thirteen, Karla went to an Allman Brothers concert and, after dancing in front of the band, was invited by one of the crew to go back to the hotel with them. She didn't call home until the next morning, and when she did her mother wasn't surprised: she figured something like that was going to happen soon. In no time, Karla was selling sex.

And then, in 1979, three and a half years before the murders, Mama Carolyn died of acute hepatitis, from needles, drugs, and alcohol.

KARLA turned seriously wild. She'd been using marijuana since she was eight and shot her first heroin—with a guy on a Harley, one of her sister's boyfriends—at ten. Karla says that she wasn't doing drugs to escape something, but just because she liked the way drugs made her feel. As she got older, she learned how many drugs there were—pills and acid and speed and prescription drugs—and so she just kept going. From age ten until the night she was locked up, four months before her twenty-fourth birthday, Karla Faye figures, she was on drugs solid.

Shortly after her mother's death, Karla set herself up in a Midland, Texas, motel where she worked as a prostitute once a month. She was twenty. She also had gigs in Enid, Oklahoma, and in Houston, working conventions and servicing regulars. She ran with bikers, learned karate and how to fight, and became Miss Tough Guy.

She had a gang, with its own primitive rules, and because she was athletic and tomboyish and handy with her fists Karla thought of herself as its principal enforcer, particularly when it came to her good friends, like Shawn Jackson, or her sister Kari. (By then, her eldest sister, Kathi, had moved into a different life, where people worked in the daytime and got paid salaries, instead of in drugs and tips and jewelry.) And when Shawn hooked up with Jerry Dean—a weak man pretending to be a tough guy by owning a Harley-Davidson—Karla, the enforcer, took against him in no uncertain terms. Jerry Dean, she said, wasn't entitled to own a Harley. He was—her word—"a pussy." One day, Karla came home from Midland to find Dean's Harley parked in her living room, dripping oil on the carpet. Karla was a hothead, and when she then found Dean upstairs, in her own bed, having sex with Shawn, she had a fit and threw him out.

At some point, Jerry Dean got hold of some of Karla's photo albums—Shawn had been keeping them for her—and, in an act of revenge, he stabbed some of the pictures, including one of her mother. A mistake: the next day she surprised Dean, as he was waiting for Shawn in his car; she roared from the house and punched him out, breaking his glasses, and he had to be taken to the emergency room to remove bits of glass from his eyes. (Karla was proud of her punch—a closed fist, like a man's.) Meanwhile, Dean retaliated, claiming that he'd put a contract out on Karla—to have her face burned with a flare gun. And so it went on.

Karla liked her men street-tough. She liked men in skintight T-shirts, bluejeans, and motorcycle boots, men who could hold their drink and drugs. She liked men who took her to gun shows and bought her camouflage T-shirts: "Kill Them All. Let God Sort Them Out." She expected a man to be able to "hold his own in any situation." Jerry Dean was not such a man.

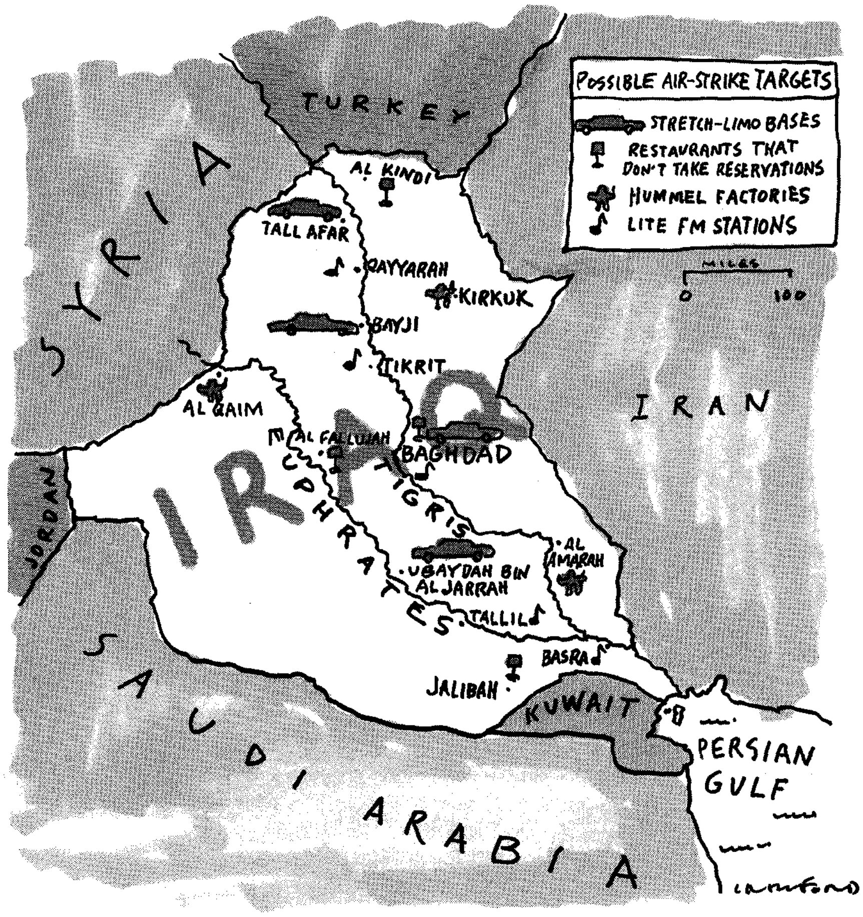
On Friday, June 10, 1983, Karla and her pals began celebrating Kari's birthday with a long weekend of sex, drugs, barbecued ribs, and music. By Sunday night, after three days of eating pills, shooting crystal, and drinking tequila, there was only Karla and a sometime pal, Jimmy Leibrant. Her boyfriend, Danny Garrett, was working late. Garrett was thirty-seven and was a bartender at a swingers' bar called the Jet Set Club. He had been living with Karla for six months. (He wanted to marry her; she wouldn't have it.) By the time he got home, Karla and Jimmy were "very wired and we was looking for something to do." They'd shot enough speed to propel them to the moon and back and didn't know what to do with the energy. Later, Jimmy would say, "We . . . was . . . over-amped. I was to the point of, yeah, O.K."

Danny Garrett had an idea.

In 1984, Karla Faye told her jury all this. Six months later, she testified against Garrett in his trial, and told it again. When I went to meet her in 1989, she told me, and I described much of it in my book. The details do not change, and she has never flinched from any question put to her. She refers to the people she murdered as "my victims," and, on the stand, she said she wanted to tell the story of the murders so that the world would know how "sick-minded" she and her friends were back then. When she looks back at the things she did, she says, "I did *that*?"

And so, at three in the morning, the three of them decided to go to Jerry Dean's apartment. To steal motorcycle parts that he didn't deserve; to case the place; to scare the would-be biker. Karla described it as a "what do you call

HITTING SADDAM WHERE IT HURTS



it? Reconnaissance mission." Dean's apartment—on Watonga Street, in an iffy part of Houston called Spring Branch—was dark. Karla had a key, which she'd found in Shawn's jeans pocket, and she and Garrett went in. (Leibrant had gone to look for Dean's car.) They were wearing dark T-shirts, bluejeans, and black boots.

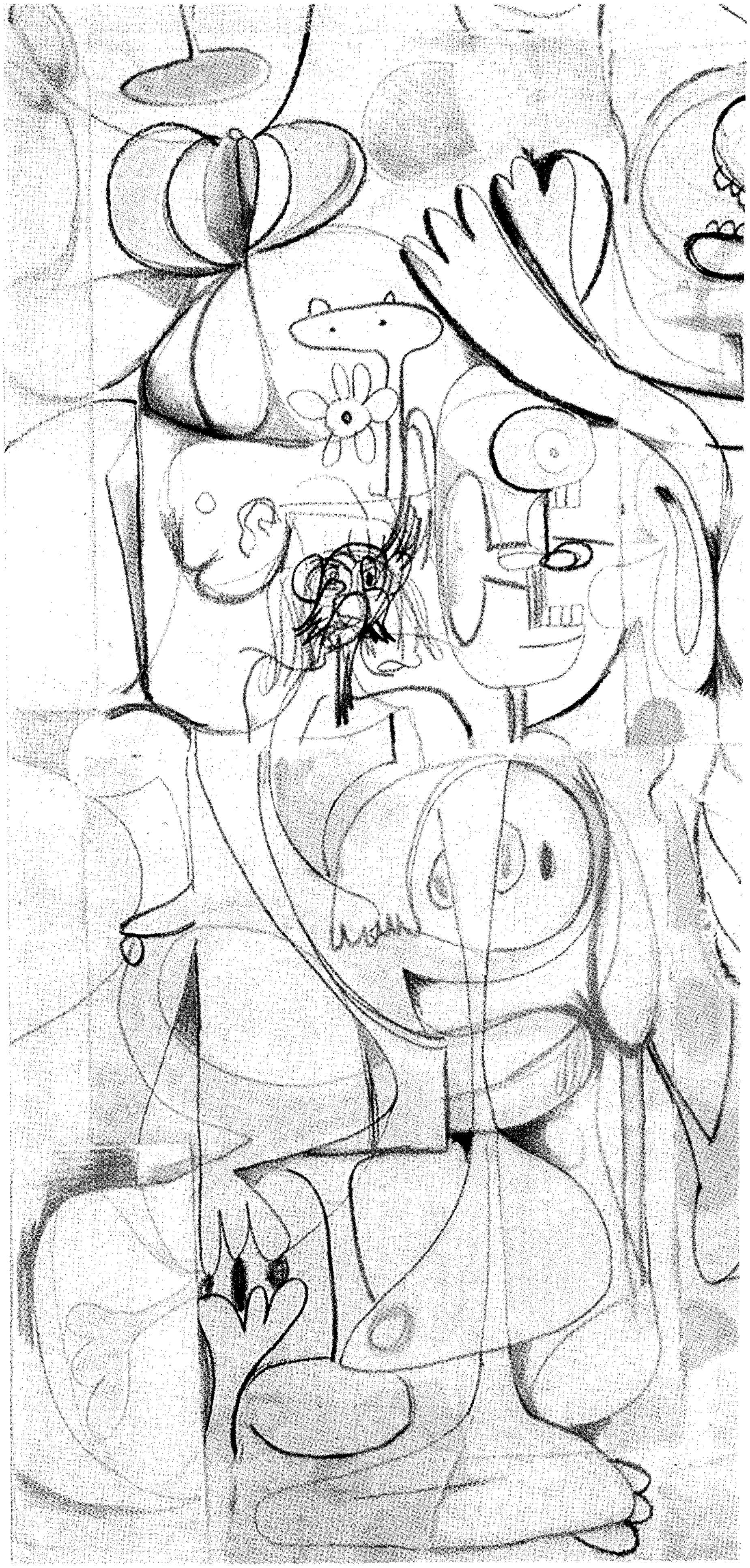
"What's going on?" a voice, Dean's, called out, and they followed it down the hall and into the bedroom where Dean was. Karla calmly walked up to him, sat on his lap, and told him to shut up. The two of them started to struggle, and suddenly Karla saw the silhouette of Garrett hitting Jerry Dean with a hammer, a blow that broke his neck. Dean rolled over. Garrett then left the room to start collecting motorcycle parts.

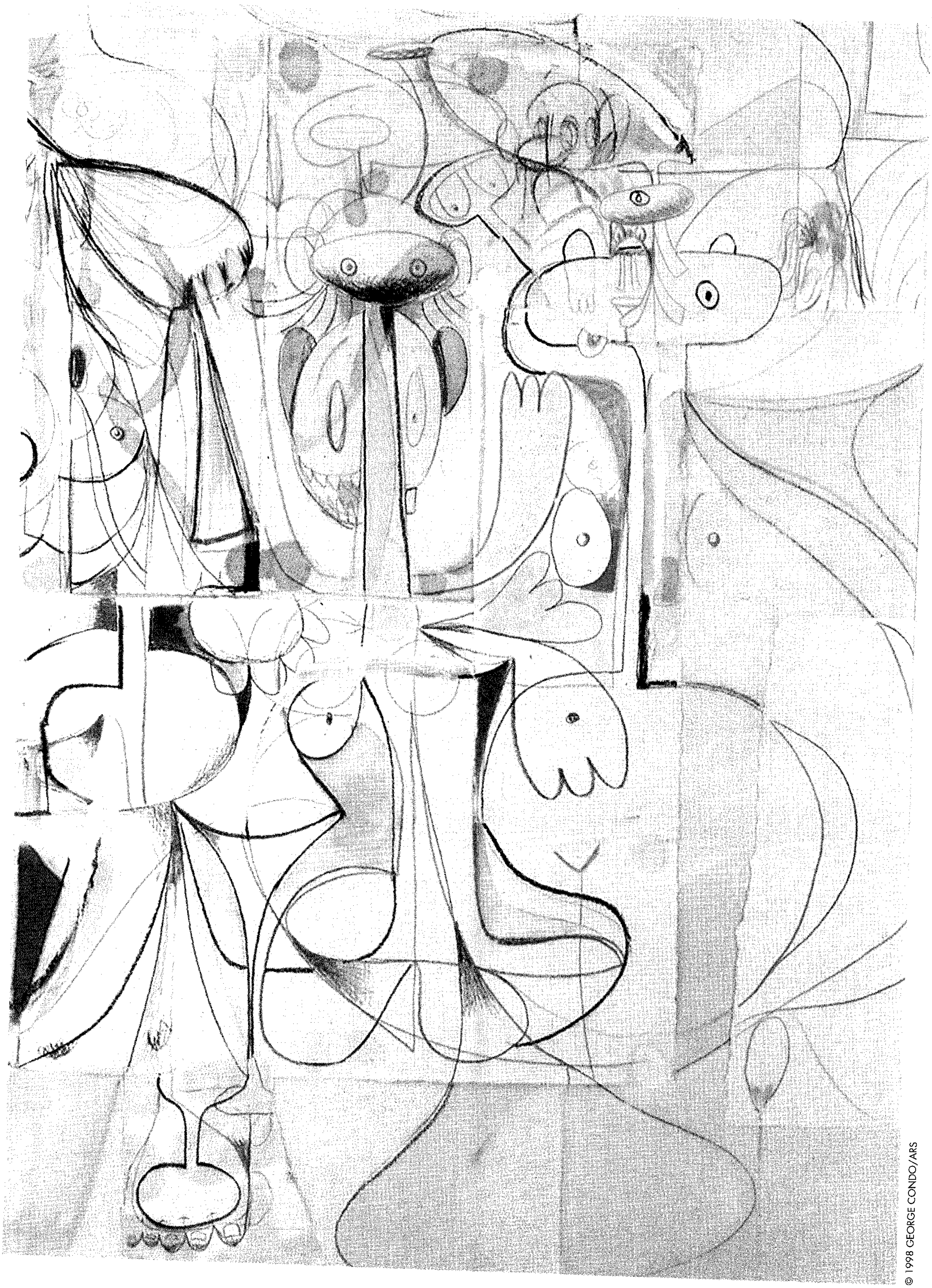
But Jerry Dean wasn't dead: he started making a noise—a terrible, incessant gurgling, as his lungs filled up with blood. Karla turned the light on and was standing there, and he was "making this gurgling noise . . . and I kept hearing that sound and all I wanted to do was stop it. I wanted to stop him from making that noise. So I looked, I seen a pickaxe against the wall. I reached over and grabbed it and swung it and hit him in the back with it." (Dean slept in the room with his tools—the pickaxe was for a job installing cable television—just as he kept his Harley in his living room.)

When Leibrant came in and saw Karla

HIGH STYLES

In his current show of ten big collage paintings at the Pace Wildenstein Gallery (through March 7th), George Condo serves up yet another tour de force. This forty-year-old American gets better and better as his range expands. Having absorbed Picasso, Miró, Matta, Gorky, and late de Kooning, he applies his protean talent here to a series of colorful, loopy, semi-abstract landscapes like "Sunflower" (right), all of which incorporate preliminary drawings as collage elements. Landscapes? Condo says that he lives in a landscape of "ripped drawings, of paint all over the place, of . . . images that have been thought about and turned and twisted," and, that being the case, he "may as well just make art of it."





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laying into Dean's back with the pickaxe, he immediately left—or, in Karla and Danny's words, "tucked tail and ran." (He later turned state's evidence.)

Only when Dean was quiet did Karla realize that there was another person in the room, hiding underneath some sheets against the wall. She was Deborah Thornton. She was thirty-two, married—with a son and a stepdaughter—and worked as a bookkeeper for a mortgage company. Dean had met her only that afternoon, at a swimming-pool party, and she had gone home with him, bringing along a green-striped dress and hot rollers so that she could go straight to work the next morning. When Karla discovered Thornton hiding under the sheets, shaking, she swung the pickaxe but only grazed a shoulder. The pickaxe, Karla said, "did not penetrate. I tried again the second time, and when I did the person came up from under the covers and it was a woman and she grabbed at the pickaxe." By the time Garrett returned to help, Karla and Thornton were struggling, and he grabbed the pickaxe and plunged it into her shoulder. He then kicked her in the head and, according to Karla, "pulled the pickaxe out at the same time and when he kicked her it knocked her back flat on her back, and he hit her and put the pickaxe right there in her chest."

At seven that morning, a man came to pick Jerry Dean up for work. His name was Gregory Scott Travers. He discovered the bodies; at Karla's trial, he gave a chilling account of what it was like to come upon such a scene. He stood at the bedroom door. "I seen the girl with a pickaxe in her heart," he said.

On December 8, 1997, I got a call from the office of Mac Secrest, Karla's lawyer: Karla's appeal had been rejected by the Supreme Court. It was not unexpected, but it was still a shock. The next day, the Texas newspapers described the decision as preparing the way for Karla's execution. In his weekly column, William F. Buckley, Jr., suggested that Texas's governor, George W. Bush, had a "helluva problem" on his hands.

In Texas, when an inmate applies for parole, clemency, or commutation, the case is first reviewed by an eighteen-member Board of Pardons and Paroles. The board is appointed by the governor, and the members serve six-year terms, at a salary of seventy-five thousand dollars a year. If, after reviewing a case, the board sees fit to recommend clemency, it sends that recommendation to the governor, who can then either grant commutation or deny it. If the board does not recommend clemency, the governor does not have to do anything. In practice, of course, the governor can do almost anything he wants.

The son of the former President faces reëlection in November. He opened his campaign on December 3rd with a twenty-six-city tour that began in West Texas, in flat, gritty Midland. Bush, who has been considered a possible Republican candidate for President, has focussed on two issues as governor: education and crime. He likes school and hates crime.

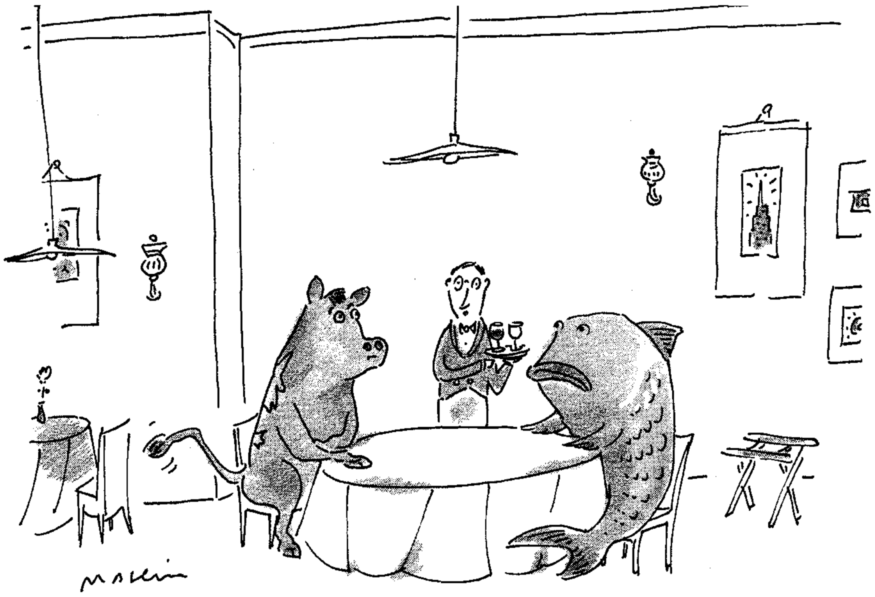
At this moment, there are a hundred and forty-one thousand people incarcerated in Texas. The state's prisoner population has exploded. Prisons are now run by private corporations, and there is a need for more prisons. There is also a demand for more locks, chains, shackles, handcuffs, and leg irons. Prisons are big business in Texas.

Governor Bush's spokeswoman has said that he will treat Karla Faye Tucker's case the same as any other, and that gender will not be a factor, nor will her conversion to Christianity. A hundred and forty-four men have been executed in Texas in the last twenty-two years.

The chairman of the Board of Pardons and Paroles, Victor Rodriguez, lives in San Antonio, and is a former police chief. On December 3rd, Victor Rodriguez made a trip to Gatesville, to visit Karla Faye. He is said to have asked her if she thinks that women should receive the same treatment as men, and she said yes. He asked her to go back over the details of her crime but has not said why. He has never visited another death-row inmate while an appeal was pending, and has said time and again that gender will not be a factor in the board's decision. But it's hard to think of any other reason for him to have made the trip to Mountain View.

There are other political considerations. An inmate named Erica Sheppard—who murdered a woman for her car, and has been on the row for three years—is asking that all appeals in her case be stopped. She has told her lawyer that she wants to go ahead and said—in Gary Gilmore's famous last words—"let's do it." Sheppard wants the whole thing over and done with. Unless she changes her mind, she will be executed on April 20, 1998. This means that the Governor of Texas could face executing two women in a matter of months. Sheppard is black. It seems unlikely that Bush will grant clemency to one woman, a white, and deny it to another, a black.

And then, on December 13th, Richard Thornton was interviewed by the Houston *Chronicle*. Richard Thornton was Deborah Thornton's husband. He had never before said a word about his wife's murder. "She was sentenced to death," he said of Karla Faye. "She needs to die." He went on to call her an evil, horrible person. He now planned to attend her execution. He would be



"Sorry, but you're going to have to remind me who gets the red wine and who gets the white."

taking his stepson, Deborah Thornton's son, who was twelve at the time his mother was killed.

Karla has spoken of the support she has received from her victims' families—from Jerry Dean's sister, Peggy Kurtz, and from Deborah Thornton's brother, Ronald Carlson, who have both asked that her life be spared—as grounds for clemency. Richard Thornton's statement is a blow. He is clearly not in a forgiving frame of mind.

WHEN Karla first arrived at Mountain View, in 1984, she was alone for a while, and was brutally lonely. Then a woman named Pamela Perillo, who'd been in Houston on trial, returned and joined her. Perillo was there for her part in the strangling of two strangers in Houston, in 1980. For a couple of years, Karla and Perillo were the only two women on death row. Perillo taught Karla to crochet, knit, and do needlepoint. Perillo's dresses were popular among the other women at Mountain View, who often wore them when they went to Dallas for a court date.

"The one single thought that sustains me is that the fundamentals are good."

Because Karla and Perillo had both been bad girls, with many of the same excesses, they were looked down on by Betty Lou Beets, who arrived on death row in October of 1985. Beets had been convicted of murdering her husband but still proclaimed her innocence. Moreover, Beets had never done drugs or had sex for money; she had been, after all, a married woman. She felt herself to be superior. So, too, did Frances Newton, who arrived three years later. Newton had been convicted of killing her husband and her two small children and was at the time the only black among the four women on death row: she, too, thought she didn't belong. Cathy Henderson arrived in 1995. She had been convicted of murdering a three-month-old baby in her care: she was its babysitter. Erica Sheppard also arrived in 1995. The last, Darlie Routier, arrived in 1997. She'd once owned a two-story house in a suburb of Dallas and had driven a Jaguar. Darlie Routier was convicted of stabbing her five-year-old son. She says she used to look down on people in prison until she got locked up herself.

Last year, Karla told me that she and Newton had, at last, become close friends, and that they played Scrabble together, and sometimes the scores went up into the high three hundreds. She said that Newton was particularly smart, and that she read the newspaper as well as the books Karla was sent and liked to talk about what was going on. The two women had long conversations together.

Because there are so few women on Texas's death row—seven, as opposed to four hundred and thirty-seven men—they do tend to get along, for all their social differences. If anything, the main complaint, according to the warden, Pamela Baggett, is that "they just won't hush." During the day, the women eat and work together, making Parole Pal dolls, which the prison sells to its employees. When they finish, they watch television, play board games, knit, do needlepoint. They have parties. They make masks for Halloween, and one of the women usually plays Santa Claus at Christmas.

Sometimes imprisoned people experience a childhood they never had. Something like that happened to Karla. In my favorite photograph of her, she's in a shapeless blue prison dress, standing dead-on before the camera, looking a little chubby from eating candy instead of shooting drugs. She has a timid smile; it's the first picture since childhood in which she's soft, instead of stony. Jail has made her a softer person.

Warden Baggett says that when a woman on the row gets a date it casts a pall on everybody else. Reality sets in. Perillo is on the verge of running out of appeals, and Beets's case is not too far behind. Karla now has her date; so, too, does Sheppard. The seven women on the row are currently in a high state of anxiety.

I'M a guest on a nationally syndicated radio call-in show on January 18th. Among the guests are Richard Dieter, the head of the Death Penalty Information Center, in Washington, D.C.; Joe Magliolo, a former prosecutor in the case; and, once again, Richard Thornton.

Thornton is on a roll. Whatever he disagrees with, he calls a lie. He says that Karla is faking her religious conversion. He turns on me and says that media people have always been against the death penalty, but that the law is the law, and she should pay. All the call-ins are saying more or less the same thing: "Kill her now." A man from Silver Spring, Maryland, says that he'd like to come down and fry her himself. A Baptist preacher from Tennessee reads Old Testament Scripture—three long verses—justifying capital punishment. When I'm asked if the opinions heard on the show reflect the sentiment in Texas, I say I hope not and laugh, but no one laughs with me.

I ASK Karla what she believes will happen. She sighs. "Oh, some days I wake up and think it's going to happen. Other days"—shrug, big smile—"I think it won't." She leans forward to make her point. "But remember this: If I get a commutation it's because God has a plan. It's for the bigger picture. And if I get executed it's because God has a plan for the bigger picture."

There's not a lot I can think of to say in reply.

All these things going on, she continues, are not about her. "We're reaching a lot of people. A whole lot of people."

Karla's insistent use of the "we" continues to cause my feet to jitter. What "we"? Pat Robertson and his happy followers? Karla's hard-core religious fervor has made me uneasy from the beginning, which she knows, and, usually, whenever it expresses itself I just back off. But she is facing an appalling prospect, and I can't change the subject. She's buzzing, in a state of high energy, intoxicated by the dream of what's going to happen next, "the bigger picture." Anyway, the appeal is obvious—a Jesus who offers total forgiveness has to be attractive to a condemned murderer.

Karla's attention drifts; there is a lot going on. I sense in her an awareness that whatever she happens to do next will probably not be repeated. These are final experiences.

After the "700 Club" interview, she is scheduled to meet with *Newsweek* for twenty minutes. Sometime later, she's hoping to meet with Ronald Carlson, Deborah Thornton's brother.

"I have to see Ronnie," she says, and she frowns. "It's important."

A guard leans in close to Karla and whispers, "About five minutes, Karla."

LITTLE APPLE OF MY EYE

(VARENNA, ITALY)

In the park leading to the post office
each morning on the way to collect the mail I don't get
I meet the same woman coming slowly up
the steep stairway that leads to the upper town.

Short, thick-hipped, bundled up in sweaters,
scarves, a thick wool coat, she is led by
a small black-and-white dog straining first
one way and then another against the leash.

There is such patience and tenderness for the dog
that for some weeks I took her to be an Englishwoman,
so many endearments repeated over and over,
one of which I heard as "Little apple of my eye."

•

Late, October chill. At dawn the lake dreams
in the heavy mist. The tall cypress stand out
against the far hillsides going yellow and red.
By ten the rain is settling on the wet leaves

of the maples and chestnuts below my window.
In jacket, raincoat, boots, and hat I start down
the trail that leads to town. The woman is not English.
Her husband was the wild butcher who founded

the town's antique-motorcycle club after the war,
before he ran off the road to Lecco and broke his hip,
before he was stapled back together and left her
for good on his B.M.W. stolen from the Afrika Korps.

•

The woman is not English. She did not say,
"Little apple of my eye." God knows what she said.
Today she comes toward me, her hair plastered down
under a red silk scarf, chanting her endearments

I FIND myself thinking of the shuttle bus I took at the start of this trip. I had to get from Tuscaloosa, where I now live, to the airport in Birmingham, some sixty miles away. I left before daylight, and was the only passenger on the bus. The driver's name was Julia. I told her I was going to visit a woman who was scheduled to be executed in two weeks. And, as if out of some unknown blue otherness, Julia started telling me about her life, especially her troubles with her boyfriend, who had cut her, stomped on her, and beat her up. But she was strong now, and he was permanently out of her life.

"I got out of my place, that's all." She kept using that phrase. "The Devil tempted me, and I got out of my place."

I asked her what her place had been, and she began telling me about her conversion to Christianity, eighteen years previously, when she was a druggy, wild young woman, and heard a voice clear as day saying to her "Julia?" and she changed her life and became a healer, and a prophetess.

When we got to the airport, she stood up and held me by the shoulders and, looking straight into my eyes, said, "Now, don't you worry about Karla Faye. She's going to be all right. Don't you worry about her. She's going to be in a glorious place. And she'll be happy there."

Well, she would say that, wouldn't she? But I can't help thinking of it as a

to little Foxly, his coat as wet as hers, his nails
skidding on the bricks of the stairs, pulling one way
then another as she stumbles behind him cooing,
"Little apple of my eye," as the rain streams down.

Everyone has a story. If you linger long enough
outside the post office or in the tobacco shop,
they'll tell you the day the mad butcher returned,
seven years later, with a white beard and a new woman.

•

In the Protestant cemetery rests the old gentleman
who came to town to drink the white waters
of the Fiumelatte, the river of milk, he thought
would cure his migraines. Daily he trooped up and down
these hills with Foxly behind, in rain and sunshine,
hoping also to clear his poor lungs of Nottingham.
Somehow he never noticed the poisonous clouds drifting
over the south end of the lake, a gift from Milan

that stained the windows of his rooms a greasy yellow.
When he stood, apoplectic, in the post office, stamping
his cane and demanding attention, the dog at his side,
he did not shout out, "Little apple of my eye."

•

The tan 1939 B.M.W. 500 c.c., now with sidecar
for the young wife and genuine gas-mask cannister,
sulks all afternoon in the rain outside the butcher shop.
They say he cuts the best veal in town, thin as paper,

sells to the best hotels and the villas up on the hills.
When with his good leg he fires up the motorcycle
the whole town can hear it. Everyone knows everything
about these lives, their comings and goings.

They do not know who said, "Little apple of my eye."
Even I, the only one who heard it, will never know.
Tomorrow a clear, cold day will break over the lake,
pouring its soft light down on all the secret houses.

—Philip Levine

dream—that same dream in which Karla now lives—or, at best, a metaphor, and I don't like talking in metaphors about death. If they inject that poison into Karla's bloodstream, I'm afraid she'll be gone. Cold flesh. And, after a time, dust.

It's my last five minutes, and Karla is telling me that in Heaven she won't look as she appears now. As she speaks, she's as radiant as a heater, turned up high. She plucks at the skin at her wrist. "This is not who we are," she says. "We are much more beautiful than this. And up there?" She points toward the ceiling. "I'll be in a glorious state. I'll be in a different form. But I'll recognize people I don't even know. I'll know people by name, even if I've never met them." She shakes her head. "Oh, I'm going to be busy! A lot of people have asked me to take messages to their families and friends. I have a whole lot of people to say hello to." She starts to list them. She mentions her mother, and my son, Peter.

She reads from the Bible, a description of Jesus making the way for others into Heaven, but I'm not listening. It's over. Separated by the Plexiglas, we clasp our own shoulders as a substitute for hugging one another. She sends love to other people we both know, and I start out. The 700 Clubbers are almost set up. When I look back, Karla is talking to a guard about the next visit.

I'm on I-35 going back south toward Austin, and an obvious thought sinks in: I may never see Karla Faye Tucker again.

Before Peter was killed, he had been living in an apartment with friends and was regularly in trouble with the law. Nothing big, but a lot of little trouble all the time. Then he moved back home. He wanted to start over. He had a job and he wanted to go back to school. He was eighteen years old, and he wanted to finish high school. Had he reached the point where he was actually ready to settle down and stop messing up his life? I hoped so.

Then somebody hit him, and the hope went nowhere.

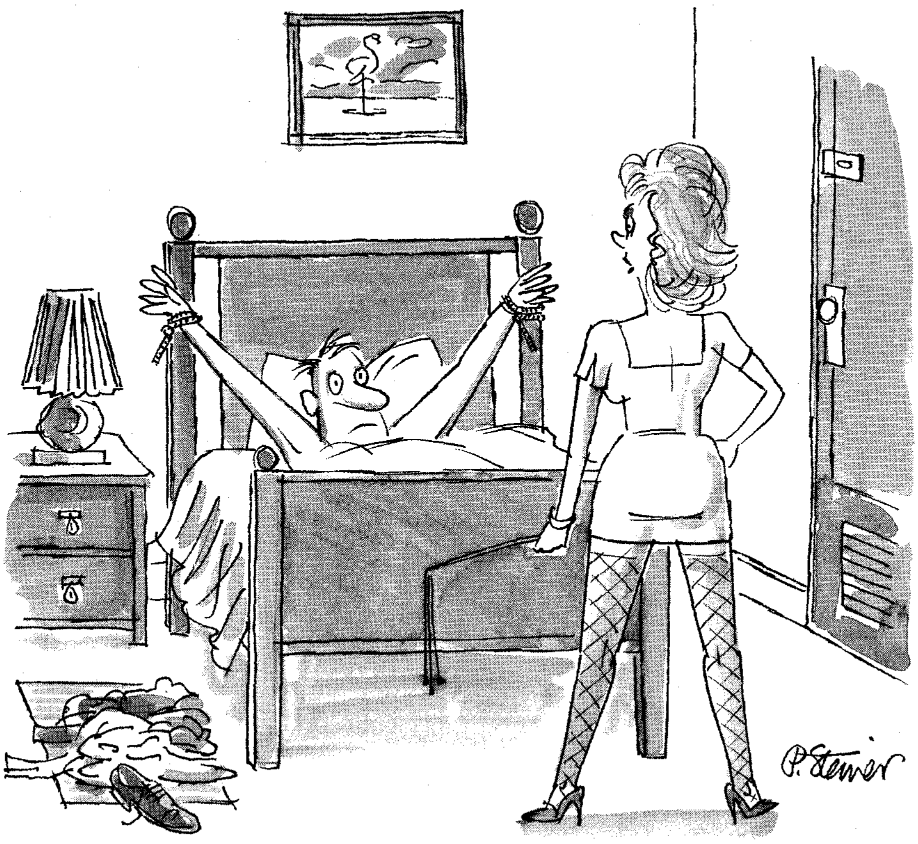
Fourteen years later and I still have dreams about him, looking for him, trying to figure out where he went. Karla thinks she knows, and when I'm with her, in the aura of her dream, I keep hoping that some of her certainty will rub off on me. Is that my weakness—to exploit a woman facing the termination of her life? To use her in the hope that I can enjoy, even vicariously, something of her total conviction and maybe share her calm? She knows I'm doing it. And maybe, in her way, she has used me, too, to tell her story.

To me, Peter seemed finally to be working hard to make himself into another, better version of himself, and then, before he was finished, he was gone. Karla, too, has worked hard to become another, better version of herself, and now, with that work virtually completed, she, too, is about to be gone. If there is, as she says, a bigger picture, then that's a happy thing.

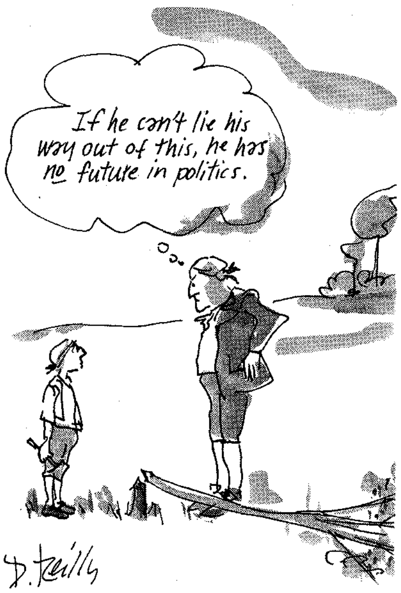
Karla Faye Tucker is still alive. The Board of Pardons and Paroles, which is considering Karla's final clemency appeal, will announce its decision on Monday, February 2nd, the day before her scheduled execution. There is a chance of a reprieve, however unlikely, however unprecedented.

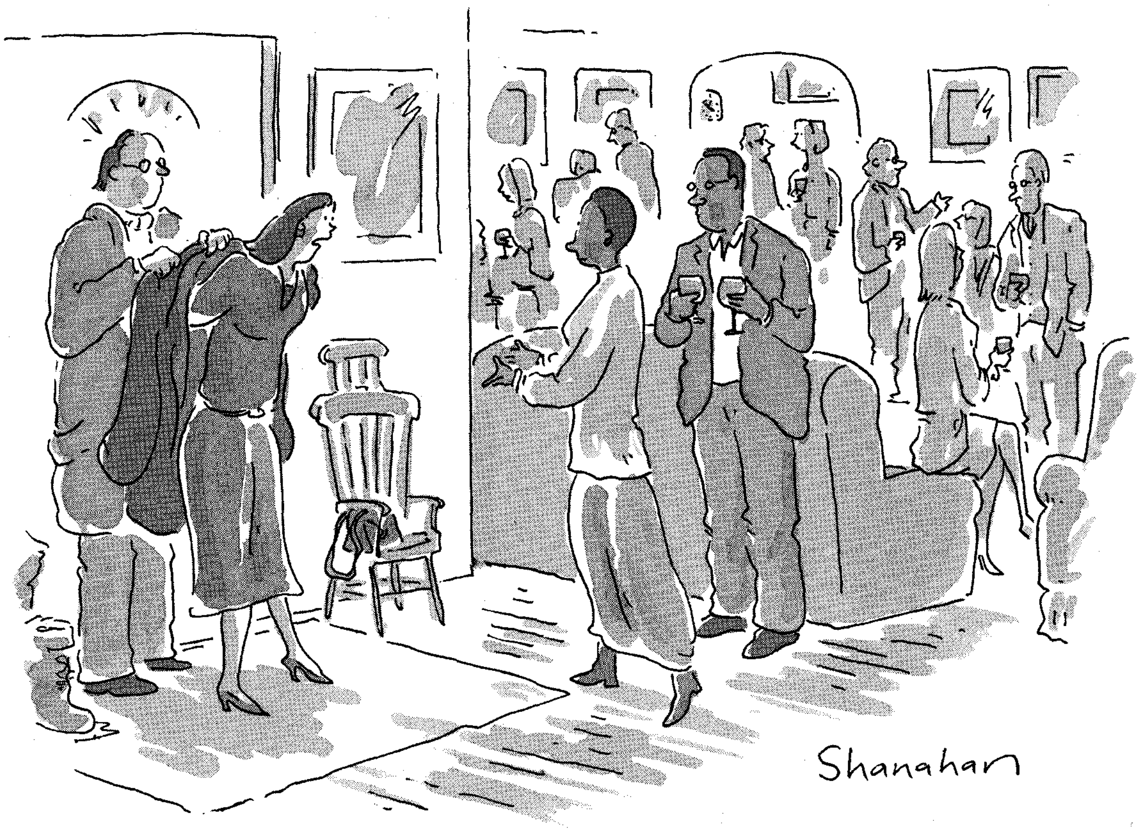
I can't get an aisle seat on the flight home from Austin, so I'm jammed next to the window. When we lift up over the clouds, I catch the sunset. The sky is a bubbling fluorescent pink, startlingly bright. Down below me, all they are seeing is clouds. I'd like to take it for a sign, but I don't know of what. ♦

FURTHER REVELATIONS

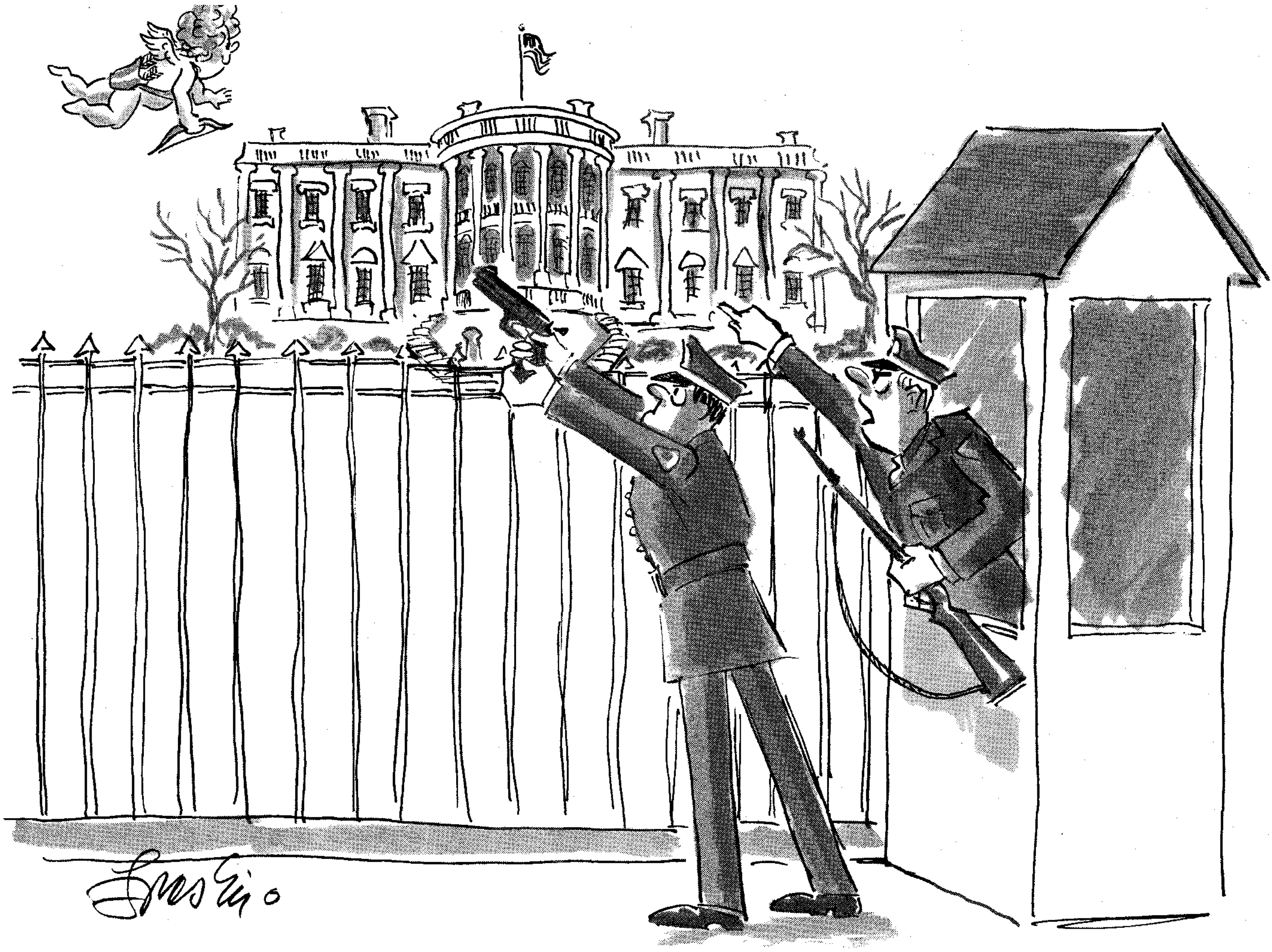


"I can do a nurse or a teacher, but I don't know anything about White House interns."

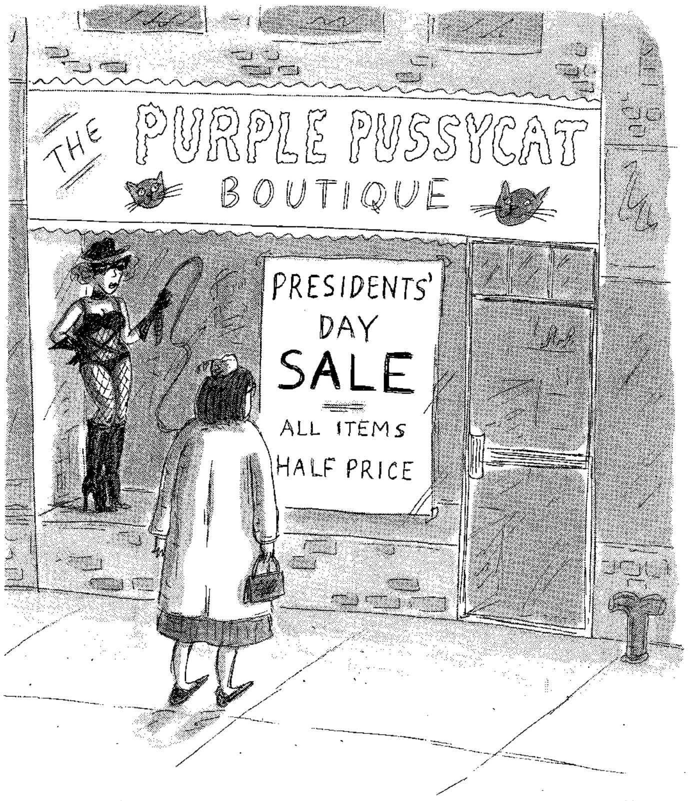

If he can't lie his way out of this, he has no future in politics.
D. Reilly



"Sorry we're late, but Kenneth Starr subpoenaed our regular babysitter."



"Shoot to kill!"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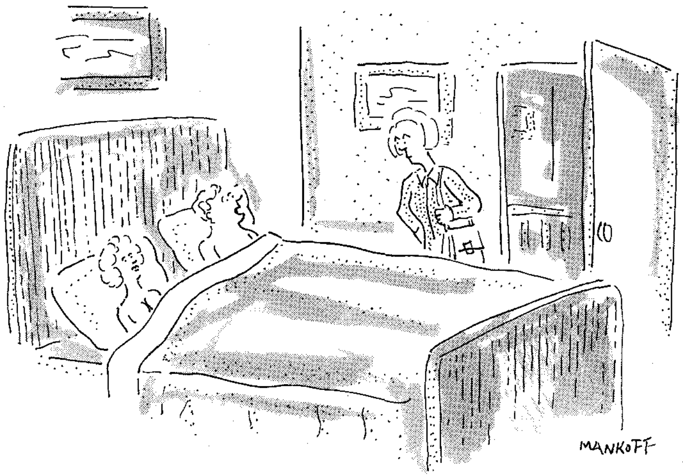

"Look, I've denied it—can we move on?"

FICTION

NAVAL AVIATION

Years after Argentina's dirty war, a secret resurfaces.

BY HANS KONING

HE story I am about to relate has been in my head a long time. You could say I dreamed it up, but, if so, I dreamed it up the way a painter composes a fantastic landscape whose forms and shadows he has seen in reality. In my case, those forms and shadows came to me as words, in a letter containing a dozen pieces of scrap paper covered with a feverish handwriting.

ON a freezing June morning in the late nineteen-seventies, a young Argentine Navy officer was walking along the Rivadavia, the main shopping street of Buenos Aires. He was wearing the new uniform made for him by a tailor who had worked for his family for twenty or thirty years. It was white, strictly speaking appropriate only for summer, but his girlfriend always told him that white was his best color. He could see his reflection in the store windows, as the Southern Hemisphere winter sun had risen above the roofs, and he smiled at himself.

Just two days earlier, he had received official confirmation of his promotion to *alférez*, or second lieutenant, in the Naval Air Force—the lowest officer rank, but, all the same, the first stepping stone to admiral. The promotion had been a sure thing after his graduation from the academy, and he had ordered the uniform two weeks before. It had one wing sewn on the breast pocket: he was a navigator. A short leave was customary after graduation, but the previous night he had been summoned by telegram to report at the Libertad Building in the morning. He hadn't told his mother, who would have been nervous about it: the four-word telegram had had a slightly menacing air.

But walking in the cold sunlight, catching the eyes of young women who looked his way, he now thought that something exciting might be in store for him—who knows, maybe even an urgent posting to a foreign country. He was only twenty, but his name, Bocartes, was an old name in the Navy, and everyone knows that is how things are decided. His grandfather had been a naval attaché in London. His nickname was Tantas Veces (Many Times), because whatever the topic of conversation he usually managed to bring up how many times he had been taken for an English officer, a man from what the British called "the silent service"—their Navy believed in understatement; they weren't jabberers the way we are here in Argentina. London, he thought—a misty evening over the Thames—boating with an unbearably beautiful earl's daughter...

At the Libertad, he was told to report to Room 342. "Alférez Lucas Bocartes," he said, saluting the colonel seated behind a bare desk.

"Bocartes," the man repeated. "Right. We have some personnel shortages, sorry about your leave. Be here at six tonight, report to the transport section. Bring your flying jacket and all that. Understood?"

"Will I be away long, sir?" Bocartes asked. "Because I must tell—"

"You won't be long. But you will not tell anyone anything." He took a form out of his desk drawer. "You will sign this. Here's a pen."

AT six, Bocartes found three men waiting outside the transport section. They wore British-style greatcoats over their uniforms, which hid their ranks, but one of them was clearly in charge—a tall, bareheaded, and almost bald man. They didn't say a word to Bocartes. A large automobile pulled up, an old Buick sedan with civilian license plates but an Army corporal behind the wheel. The three got in the back, and the bald man leaned forward and opened the passenger door from the inside for Bocartes. "Thank you, sir," he said, turning his head.

"I'm Captain Gragi," the man said, or a name that sounded like that; Bocartes didn't quite catch it.

The corporal drove off at great speed, turning south and following the coastal highway.

"Where are we off to, gentlemen?" Bocartes ventured.

There was a long silence, and then one of them muttered, "Routine. Reconnaissance flight from the Espera Naval Air Base."

"Ah. Connected with the Malvinas, sir?" Bocartes asked, but got no answer.

Once they had left the agglomeration of Buenos Aires behind, Bocartes noticed a large truck a hundred feet back, with the markings of the Argentine mail service. After a while he realized that it was following them, keeping a constant distance. He was going to say something amusing about the evening mail being on time for once but thought better of it. The officers in the back were chain-smoking in silence. It was ice cold in the car.

Bocartes dozed off, and when he looked up next they were turning in to the airbase, the mail truck still behind them.

"Wait here, Alférez," he was told, and the three men vanished into the building.

Fuck it, Bocartes thought, they aren't very jolly, are they? Surely they could have let me come indoors with them. They might even have told me to get some coffee. His watch said that it was nearly two in the morning. What a godforsaken hour. He posted himself behind a utility pole and had a pee.

Black clouds were chasing across the sky, between them a fleeting view of the moon. The wind seemed to blow straight from Tierra del Fuego, if not from the South Pole itself. He heard the grinding of a hangar door's being opened, and in the uncertain light a BA-200 transport plane appeared, the old workhorse of the Naval Air Force—two engines, propellers, eighteen hundred horsepower, maximum speed a hundred and eighty miles an hour. The lights along the runway came on, blinding him.

"Bocartes, follow me," said a voice. The Captain had reappeared. He nodded with his head toward the plane. "This is not a pleasant assignment, Alférez," he said. "You are in a detail that transports political prisoners—criminals—to a penal colony in the South. It is secret, for these men have dangerous allies among the population. I don't have to tell you that Argentina is going through difficult times—we all have to tackle unpleasant tasks."

Bocartes was too surprised to think of an answer. His posting in London, a misty evening over the Thames—

"Well, *do* I have to tell you?" the Captain asked sharply.

"No, no, sir. Of course not."

"Good man. Your grandfather would be pleased with you. Let's get on with it, shall we?"

They reached the plane, and the Captain climbed aboard through the rear door. A wooden platform had been placed there to make boarding easier, but he ignored it. Bocartes followed him up. Inside, he looked around in bewilderment. There was a row of men huddled on a bench that ran along one side of the cabin. The only light came from little spots along the ceiling, one every five or six feet. The men were wrapped in army blankets, and some leaned forward, but they were held in place by a long chain running in front of the bench. Those nearest Bocartes seemed to sit with their eyes closed. The only sounds from them were sighs, murmurs, racking coughs. They were all barefoot, and after his eyes adjusted Bocartes saw that their ankles were chained, and their wrists, too.

The Captain had walked past the row and back again. "All seems in order," he said. "I'm going forward. We'll be off soon. You're in charge here, but you'll have a sergeant, Sergeant Rosa, he knows the ropes. He'll be here and he'll lock this door. Those guys won't give you trouble—they've been tranquillized. For their own good. O.K. Rosa knows the drill." He turned and then came back. "I almost forgot. Here's the key. Rosa has one, too."

"The key?" Bocartes repeated stupidly. But the Captain had already gone; Bocartes heard him lock the cockpit door behind him.

ROSA was a short, heavyset man with hands the size of country hams. He looked particularly unmilitary, wearing a knit red scarf and what seemed to be a number of sweaters on top of each other. He tested the plane door a couple of times when he boarded, opening and closing it; only then did he turn to Bocartes and give him a sketchy salute. The engines had started up, and, as the body of a BA-200 is not insulated or pressurized, their roar filled the cabin. On each side of the door was a bucket seat. The Sergeant sat down in one and fastened the seat belt. He waved at Bocartes to do the same.

A red light went on over the door. The plane started taxiing over the rough airstrip and was quickly airborne. Rosa got up and pointed at a metal rail along the cabin, a foot below the ceiling. Bringing his head close to Bocartes, he said, "This plane was once used for para training, parachute jumps!"

Bocartes nodded and stood up, too. Through the porthole near him he saw the night sky, which had a mysterious band of purple light along the horizon. Down below, the earth lay in total darkness. For a few seconds he was caught up in the happiness of flying, of a different world.

The changed pitch of the engines indicated that the plane had stopped climbing and was flying level. Sergeant Rosa produced two belts from under his seat, put one on over all his sweaters, and clipped it to the rail above his head. Then he handed the other to Bocartes. "Use this one," he shouted.

Bocartes looked blank. "Are we going to do a parachute drill?" he called with a little smile.

"You don't want to fall out," Rosa shouted back. He wrenched the door handle down and pushed the door sideways. A violent wind whirled through the cabin. It woke a few of the prisoners; for a brief time Bocartes had forgotten their presence, and now saw that some were staring at him. There was a keening sound, loud enough to be heard over the engines, and in spite of the cold wind he became aware of a nauseating smell. The little light above the open door turned green.

Rosa turned his back to him and bent over, appearing to unlock the long chain. Then, with a speed almost unnatural for such a pudgy man, he grabbed the prisoner nearest to him and pulled him to his feet. His movements were as dry as if he were handling a straw pallet. The prisoner looked unconscious, his legs buckling under him. "Take his blanket!" Rosa yelled at Bocartes. "Take it!"

Bocartes shook his head but then did as he was told. The prisoner was completely naked, a bony man, scarred, handcuffed, his legs shackled, his penis shrivelled; he was shivering so violently that Rosa had difficulty holding him up. The Sergeant put one hand flat against the man's lower back and shoved him out of the plane. It was done so fast that it was as if the man had simply vanished, dematerialized. Bocartes dropped the blanket and lurched forward toward the cockpit.

I cannot have seen this, he thought, it would have been a deadly sin just to see a thing like that. He started banging on the cockpit door, but it remained closed.

He turned back to the Sergeant, walking slowly. Rosa stood motionless, watching him with curiosity. He motioned to Bocartes to bend his head. "Calm down," he said into his ear. "Calm down, sir, Lieutenant. If you don't help, they'll chuck you out, too. We don't bring back uninvolved witnesses."

A buzz sounded and the light over the door turned red. They did hear me, Bocartes thought. They will stop.

"Freighter below us!" Rosa called. "We have to wait. Won't be long." He brought his mouth close again. "It'll be over in ten minutes. They feel no pain."

Bocartes stared at him, shaking his head without stopping. "But what have they done?" he finally managed to say.

Rosa guessed more than heard what he had said. He grinned now. "For Christ's sake!" he shouted. "What have they done. You are one stupid bugger, aren't you, Second Lieutenant?"

The light turned green.

"I'll do them all," Rosa shouted. "You

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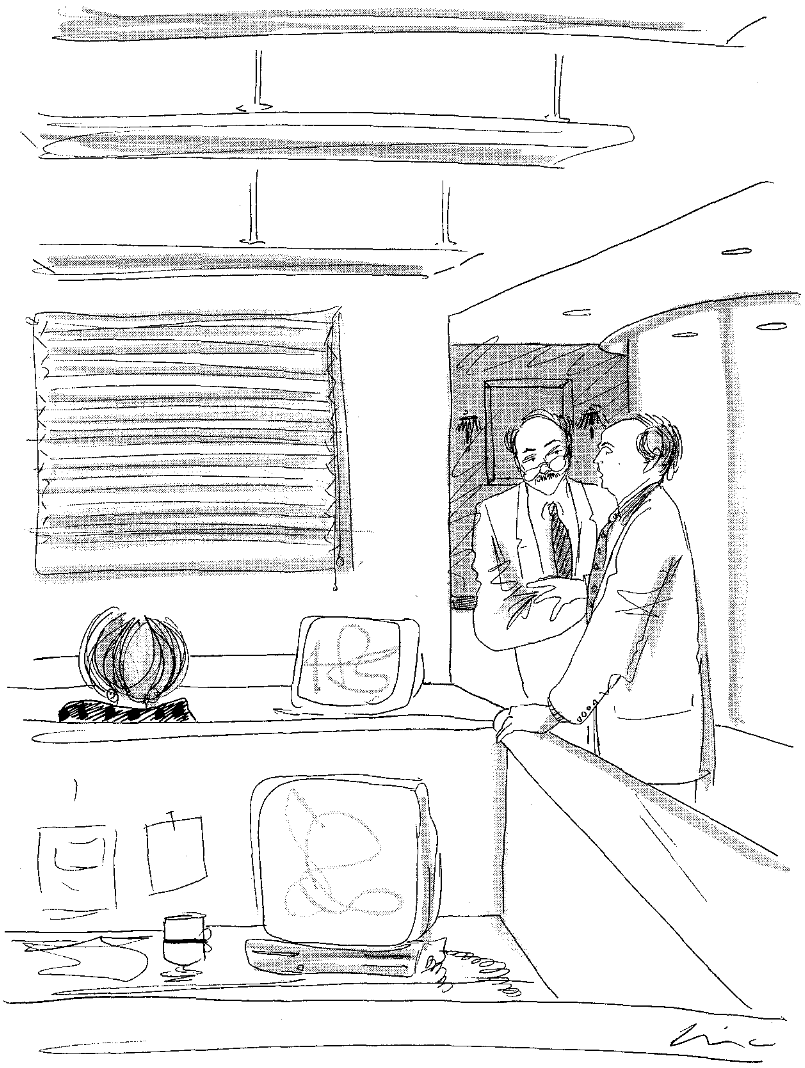

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• •

just pull the blankets off them, we don't want a bunch of army blankets floating on the ocean. Drop 'em behind you, they're wet and filthy. They shit in them."

He pulled at the next prisoner, held him on his feet, and looked at Bocartes until Bocartes took the blanket off the man and dropped it behind him. When he turned back, the man was gone.

Some of the prisoners were fully conscious now and they resisted, fighting with Rosa, trying to hang on, but the Sergeant's huge hands shook them loose. Several were screaming in a way Bocartes had heard only once before, from a mare that had run into a barbed-wire fence and tore herself apart trying to get free.

The last prisoner showed more strength. He tried to hit the Sergeant's face, but his shackled hands couldn't reach high enough. "Hit him!" the Sergeant cried, but Bocartes stood paralyzed. The Sergeant tore the blanket off the prisoner's shoulders with one hand and tried to push him out with the other.

"It's a woman!" Bocartes screamed. "She is a woman." He looked at the prisoner's bloody and battered body and then swung a fist at the Sergeant. Rosa slapped his face with such force that Bocartes fell to his knees, and the Sergeant kicked the woman out of the plane. The moon was out and Bocartes, kneeling at the open door, saw her turning and turning, the moonlight catching her body in its eternity of falling. And then, in an instant of imaginary silence, as if the plane's engines had died, he heard her cry, a cry as from the end of the world.

When the plane had landed, Bocartes climbed out and ran away into the darkness. Somehow he got off the base. Two weeks later, he was arrested in his mother's apartment as a deserter and condemned to five years' hard labor in the military prison at Rosario. He never spoke to anyone about that night.

I HAD met Lucas Bocartes when he was still a student at a Buenos Aires lyceum. I was visiting Argentina as a journalist while he was staying with the Sánchez family of Córdoba, to whom I had an introduction. They had once been the Córdoba neighbors of the Guevaras, before the Guevaras moved to the hill town of Alta Gracia because of their son Che's asthma. I had given Bocartes my address when I left Argentina. He collected stamps, and I made it a habit to send him any unusual ones from my European correspondence. Sometimes we exchanged Christmas cards. But after he went to the naval academy, we lost touch. I never heard of his arrest and imprisonment.

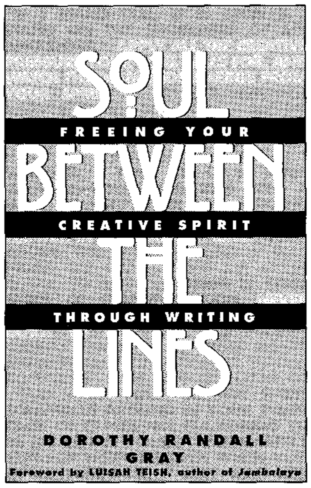
Years later I met Celia Sánchez again, in London. I happened to mention Bocartes and she told me that he had committed suicide, just a week earlier. He had shot himself in the head with the little Italian nickel-plated Bernardelli pistol he had owned even as a lyceum boy. It was only a .22-calibre and it took him twenty-four hours to die. During that time, he appeared to have lived in one continuous nightmare of falling.

A strange fate for the boy I remembered, who was fascinated by the life around him—by stamps, by geography, by London and New York, of which he talked as if he had already been there. "He hadn't been well for a long time," Celia said.

A month after I saw Celia, I received a letter from Bocartes. Its battered envelope had stamps and stickers showing that it had followed me from one address to another in the United States and Europe. The letter was written on scrap paper and much of it was indecipherable. At the top of each sheet Bocartes had written, "To be destroyed." "Destroyed" he had spelled "destrolled." On those scraps of paper was the story of the night flight of the BA-200. ◆

(Advt.)

The creative spirit is a wondrous thing. It opens our eyes, minds, and hearts to new vistas and possibilities; it inflames and inspires us, providing the push we need to reach beyond our own self-perceived limitations.



Dorothy Randall Gray has been a poet, writer, spiritual consultant, teacher, and performance artist for more than twenty years. In ***SOUL BETWEEN THE LINES*** she presents exercises, rituals, advice, and affirmations designed to awaken the creative spirit that lives within us all. The author draws upon many sources—from Motown, mythology, Native American and African spiritualism to the wisdom of Danaan Parry and Popeye—offering powerful tools to inspire not only the creation of new works of literary, visual, and musical art, but the launch of new careers, relationships, and life visions as well.

A. Manette Ansay's ***VINEGAR HILL*** is the story of a dutiful Midwestern wife and mother of two young children who accompanies her unemployed husband to the loveless, soul-suffocating home of her in-laws. Named "one of the year's best books" by the *Chicago Tribune,* this novel recreates a stifling world of guilt and pain and the tormented souls who inhabit it. But Ansay's heroine will not allow the cruelty and narrow-mindedness of others to crush her vibrant and passionate spirit as she gathers the strength she needs to endure, change, and grow.

Severna Park uses the milieu of outer space to explore provocative issues of submission and dominance, sexual roles and gender politics. In ***HAND OF PROPHECY***, she returns us to the universe she created in her well-received debut, *Speaking Dreams,* and plunges us into the heat of intergalactic turmoil, as the enslaved and imprisoned revolt and die for the right to be, and for the simple dignities owed to every sentient being.

We'll talk again.

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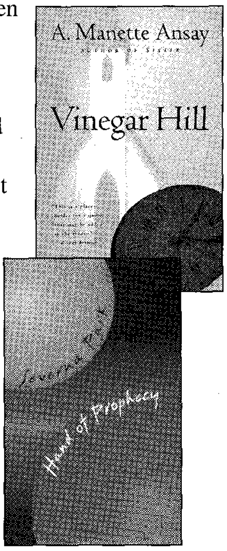

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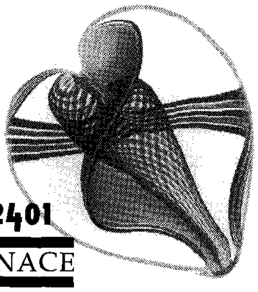

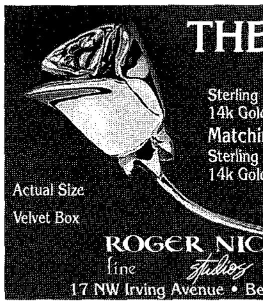

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Skip the movie and wait for the novelization.

BY ANTHONY LANE

YOU must remember this. Our eager young hero pays a visit to the beautiful Estella in the decaying old mansion. Before he leaves, she allows him to kiss her, for the first time. That kiss is both a portent of his lifelong love for her and a dangerous tease, for Estella is nothing if not cruel. As he reaches the gate, she utters the immortal words "Don't call us. We'll call you."

This touching scene will be familiar to any reader of "Great Expectations." I refer, of course, not to the novel by Charles Dickens but to Deborah Chiel's novelization of Alfonso Cuarón's new movie version of the novel by Charles Dickens. Without wishing to play down Miss Chiel's enviable gifts, I have to say that only the most casual reader will be unable to tell the difference between these two books. For one thing, there are the front covers: my Oxford edition reproduces a Marcus Stone drawing from 1862, while readers of Chiel's work (St. Martin's; $5.99) are offered the fetching image of a nude Gwyneth Paltrow. Cuarón's film switches the story to present-day Florida, and the novelization loyally follows suit. Pip is a budding painter called Jimmy Bell; his kindly brother-in-law, Joe, has become an uncle, married to Aunt Maggie, a pothead who tops up her income with gentlemen callers; Magwitch is renamed Lustig; and, most striking of all, Miss Havisham is now Nora Driggers Dinsmoor, a crazy old bat whose brain and whose dress sense are stuck tragically in the nineteen-seventies—"Her voice echoed through the cavernous ballroom as she adjusted the lacy top she wore over her harlequin-patterned Capezio stretch pants."

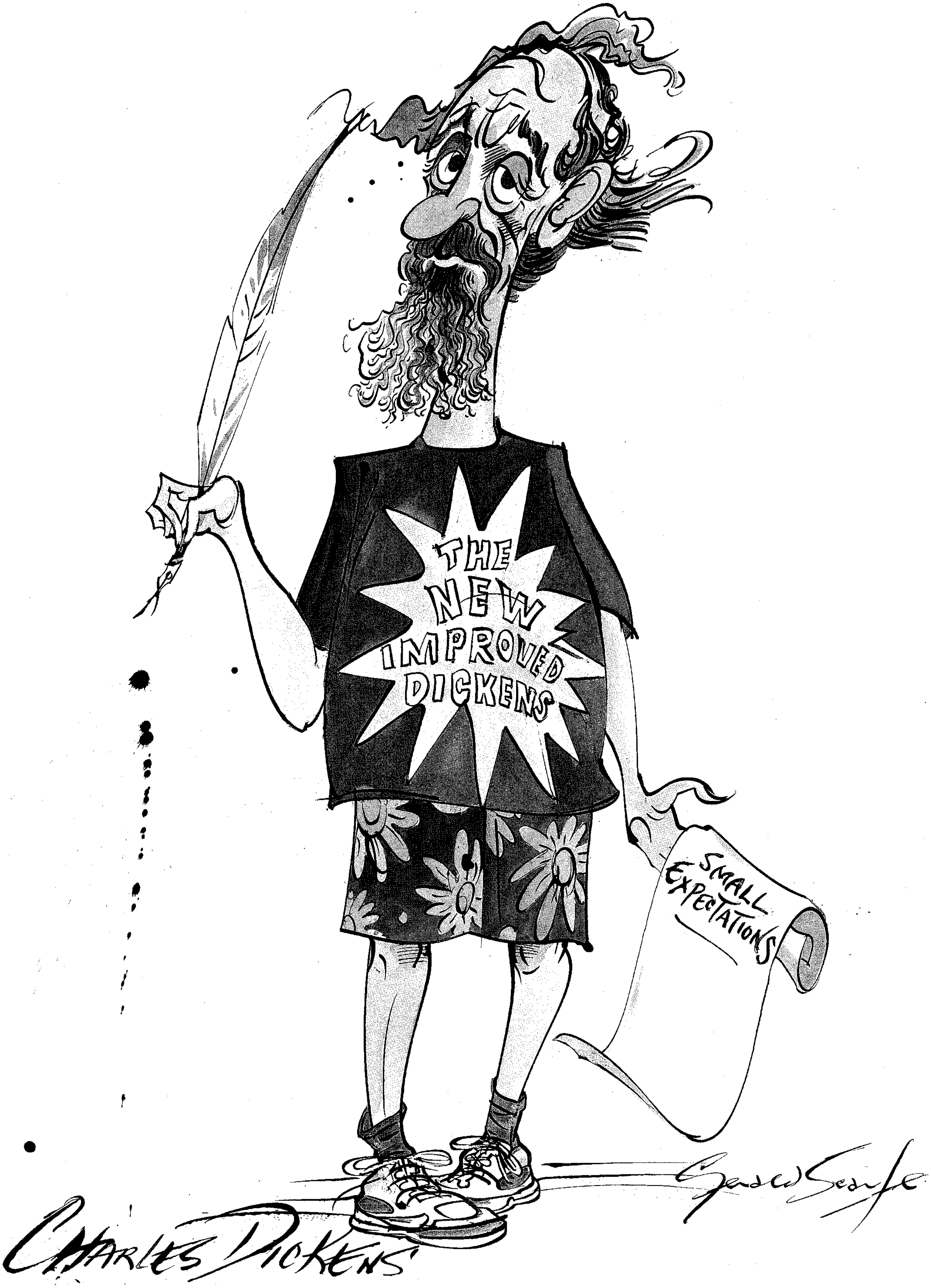
What is intriguing about these changes is that in hauling Dickens up to date they also jettison the kind of ready-made iconography that most novelists would kill for. If the sight of Miss Havisham with her yellowing bridal gown and her devastated wedding cake has branded itself into readers' minds for the last hundred and forty years, why bother to replace it with disco rhythms and a Lurex T-shirt? The answer is that novelizations are unique among literary forms in owing absolutely nothing to literature. They pay their dues to cinema alone. Sold in cheap, gleaming chunks of paperback, they look like thrillers—like the sort of book that is begging to be turned into a movie. But they have already lived as movies, and they are couched in a peculiar form of prose which subtly honors the virtues of motion pictures by demonstrating just how redundant the written word has become. I have slogged through a batch of novelizations in recent days, and their combined effect was to leave poor old literature looking like Chancery in "Bleak House": a mad, stale institution that has fogged the lives of oldsters and from which the twittering young—moviegoers, for instance—can only hope to escape.

It would be going too far to claim that novelizations represent the future of print media, but they are already standard industry practice, and they present a career opportunity. Deborah Chiel, for instance, has already produced eleven such works, inluding "Die Hard with a Vengeance," which sounds like her version of "Hard Times." And Stephen Molstad has just written "Silent Zone" (Harper Prism; $5.99), which is, if you please, a prequel to his novelization of "Independence Day." We are told in a note at the back that before that "he was a collaborator on the Hugo-nominated novelization of 'Stargate.'" That is the most touching curriculum vitae I have ever read, not least because it makes you ask what kind of vita it must entail. I think he deserves a Hugo, in fact, since his grasp of sci-fi has an easy swing that is denied to those whom I am afraid we must call his fellow-novelizators. Take A. C. Crispin's book of "Alien: Resurrection" (Aspect; $4.99), which has the distinction of being even more disgusting than the film from which it sprang: "While the Newborn had been devouring his brain tissue like so much pudding, a small chestburster had exploded from Gediman's rib cage." Among the few joys to be had from reading such garbage is that of musing on its symbolic nicety. Who could propose a more apt image for the growth of novelization than that of an oozy, unfeeling creature that bursts without so much as a by-your-leave from the shell of its aghast host?

Novelization is an appropriately foul word for a deeply suspect activity. Why it should arouse such suspicion, however, is something of a mystery. The transforming of one art form into another, after all, is so much a staple of civilization that it is tempting to wonder why artists in search of suitable material have ever bothered to apply directly to lived experience. If you came to New York, for instance, and saw the new Broadway production of "Ragtime," bought a recording of the Toscanini "Otello" at Tower Records, caught a matinée of "The Wings of the Dove," and passed a tranquil twenty minutes at the Met in front of Rubens's "Venus and Adonis" or David's "The Death of Socrates," you would not only finish your stay feeling very tired; you would have spent it encountering nothing but other people's encounters with other works of art. You could have stayed at home, of course, reading Doctorow, Shakespeare, James, Ovid, and Plato, but then you would have expired from an excess of culture in the bloodstream.

THERE are two morals to be drawn from this cautionary tale. The first is that artistic alchemy—operization, musicalization, call it what you will—offers remarkable powers of refreshment, not merely because you can pre-order drinks during the interval but because works with which we presume ourselves to be familiar are made new, often shockingly so, when viewed and reforged through imaginations more skilled than

Novelization is an appropriately foul word for a deeply suspect activity—but why does it arouse such suspicion?


THE NEW IMPROVED DICKENS
SMALL EXPECTATIONS
Gerald Scarfe
CHARLES DICKENS

our own. Though Shakespeare is tireless, we may be forgiven if our eyes and ears grow weary of his genius, and it therefore takes the second-stage genius of Verdi to wake us up. Even a failed adaptation, like "The Wings of the Dove," alerts us to lurking possibilities in the original: I didn't like the new movie, but I'm not sure that I will ever again be able to think of Henry James as asexual—as a kind of beautifully dressed amoeba.

All of this brings us to the second point: it is books that set the alchemy in train. They can, on rare occasions, be the end product; yet even then the writer is better off supplying a philosophical gloss than attempting re-creation. The efforts of William Carlos Williams to find poetic equivalents for a Brueghel landscape are oddly more desolate than Auden's ruminative spinoff from the same painter in "Musée des Beaux Arts." Whether reverence for the primacy of the word consists of little more than two and a half thousand years of one-upmanship I don't know, but there's no fighting it: if novels and poems must arise from the ashes of other works, we prefer those other works to be books. For Keats to write about Chapman's translation of Homer is a means not just of registering a thrill but of honoring the dead; by contrast, on first looking into Chiel's "Great Expectations" it's hard to suppress the feeling that her publishers are not just plugging a movie but trying to screw an extra six bucks out of the living.

Whether the living require this luxurious addition to their viewing pleasure is another matter. The very idea of novelization somehow reverses the cultural charge by which we exist: if books have long been the most fruitful sponsors of aesthetic experiment, then cinema has in the course of a century established itself firmly at the other end of the process. It is, I like to think, no discredit to movies that they have become the premier dumping ground of the arts—both the last word and a glamorous dead end. Once Mozart and Byron and Richard Strauss had had their wicked way with the legend of Don Juan, there was nowhere else for it to go except an Errol Flynn flick and, later, a more sober Joseph Losey film. If we are honest with ourselves, one of the reasons we watch movies is to rediscover the delights of not having to think, thanks to a medium that does most of the imaginative spadework on our behalf. Who on earth, after such relief, would willingly seek out the rude shock of repeating the experience on the page, where even the zero artistry of A. C. Crispin demands that we grapple with a text? In short, who is buying these books?

Well, for one thing, James Bond fans will buy anything. Their only quandary will be whether to buy "Tomorrow Never Dies" (Boulevard; $6.99), by Raymond Benson, before or after seeing the picture. They would, with some justice, contend that once the Bond movies were under way even Ian Fleming began to shape his tales with a view to a screenplay, and therefore that novelization is the same deal turned back to front. I'm not convinced. Fleming was Mr. Big, whereas Mr. Benson's talents are strictly small potatoes. What is more, the novelization of "Tomorrow Never Dies" has a nasty case of movie hangover: the action sequences, especially, are dulled by a faint blur of stage directions. "With the aid of this device, he was able to anticipate turns and obstacles before he could actually see them": how's that for a high-octane car chase? And when I read a sentence such as "He swung, but Bond blocked the blow with a *Kake-te* maneuver" all I can think of is Pierce Brosnan looking serious in a gym. Only someone whose senses have been drilled into submission by too many hours in a movie theatre would dream of writing, "The first sedan exploded spectacularly," or, better still, "Her figure was smashing." That one makes me laugh every time I read it, as does Deborah Chiel's "He briskly exited the building," but after lengthy consideration I still believe that the Hugo for Best Supporting Prose Style should go to Alexs Pate's "Amistad" (DreamWorks; $6.50) for this ethereal scene-setter: "There was also a tightening crispness in the air as winter began to whisper its entry." Ouch.

The problem with Pate is that, whether through guilt or from ambition, he exceeds his brief; not content to produce "The Official Tie-In to the Major Motion Picture Directed by Steven Spielberg," he commits the gross error of trying to write a proper book. Deborah Chiel, needless to say, gets herself into even deeper and more marshy trouble. What makes her "Great Expectations" such a sad affair is that it can't quite shake off the memory of something that isn't cinema: the ghost of books past insists on trailing through its pages. For some reason, it is amid the rantings of horny Aunt Maggie that you catch a trace of the lamentations that littered the original novel. Her verdict on the Dinsmoor mansion—"They're all nuts up there. That's what real money does"—is as concentrated a summary as you could hope to find of the fear and longing that wealth inspired in the world of Dickens. And when Maggie asks Joe, "What is it? You like our life? You like living with the dead people down here?" it's hard not to remember the grotesque intimacy that Dickens—here as in "Our Mutual Friend"—appeared to enjoy with the afterlife. Think of Pip in the graveyard, in his first meeting with Magwitch: "He looked in my young eyes as if he were eluding the hands of the dead people, stretching up cautiously out of their graves, to get a twist upon his ankle and pull him in."

A dedicated moviegoer who stumbled across that sentence would naturally say to himself, "Hey, Brian De Palma!" And it is perfectly true that Dickens's acute taste for the trappings of horror suggest that, even more than Shakespeare, he would have been content—or, at any rate, profitably amazed—to sit in the front row of a multiplex, munching nachos and watching "Carrie." Dickens was page-struck, as it were, by the theatricality with which ordinary life threw up its horrors, and that is why his "Great Expectations" is more closely attuned to our love of the movies than Deborah Chiel's effort could ever be. His great book is, in effect, both novel and novelization; it merrily—and not altogether unwittingly, given his own flamboyant public readings—predicts what fun the movie directors and theatre producers of the future will have with the gloom and drollery of its drama. The easy way to account for the accuracy of David Lean's 1946 film of "Great Expectations"—not only Lean's finest hour but the most intensely devoted of all literary adaptations, with its bold extremes of lighting and its slightly outsize performances—is that, if you were to go into a bookshop and ask for the novelization, you would be handed a copy of Dickens's original novel.

That novel ends happily, of course, in a mild manner. The author of "Alien: Resurrection" would probably call it a small chestburster. A chastened Pip meets a sorrowing Estella at the site of Satis House, and pledges his companionship: "I saw no shadow of another parting from her." Originally, Dickens had engineered a far more painful encounter, on a London street—shorn of the promise of happiness, and shadowed with a whole novel's worth of disappointment. But his friend Edward Bulwer Lytton executed what was almost certainly a *Kake-te* maneuver, and blocked the bad news: Dickens took his advice and produced "as pretty a little piece of writing as I could." In other words, he went Hollywood. Whenever you find yourself inveighing against the damage done by studios to your favorite novel, spare a thought for the Victorian novelist who first had the wit to damage himself for our delight. It goes without saying that Dickens leaves poor Deborah Chiel no option but to crank up her own happy ending, and she duly delivers the goods. "Is that you, Jimmy?" cries Estella. "How weird. How perfect, huh? To meet here." Then she hauls up her slacks and launches into the big speech:

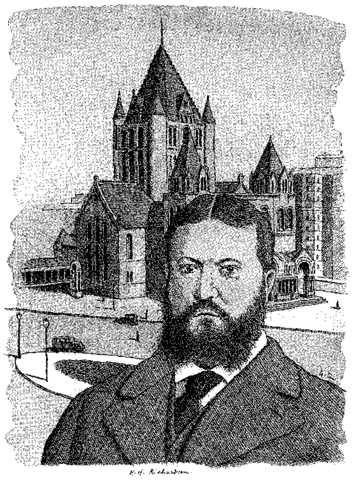
> I think of you a lot lately . . . For a while I didn't. Then, when I understood things . . . life, I guess, better; then I wouldn't let myself. But lately . . . Some things you never forget.

On the contrary. This seems to me the essence of novelization—one of those precious moments when artifice falls away, literature creeps shamefacedly into the wings, and we are left with the naked reality of the movie set. What Deborah Chiel gives us here is the unmistakable sound of Gwyneth Paltrow forgetting her lines. Perfect, huh? ◆

A FAST FULL LIFE

The exceptional legacy of H. H. Richardson.

BY BRENDAN GILL



H. H. Richardson

It is commonly said of architecture that it is a profession for the old, and there is no doubt that many of the most gifted architects in history have taken their time about arriving at a style perceived to be characteristic of them. What is more remarkable—and very unlike the situation in other professions—is that architects, once they have hit their stride, in their middle years, tend to go on flourishing into old age. It isn't in the least surprising that Jefferson in his sixties was busy designing a new house, Poplar Forest, as a retreat from the constant entertainment expected of him at Monticello; nor is it surprising that his designs for the house and grounds were highly innovative.

In our time, there come to mind several examples of architects who have been granted the enviable boon of possessing in age a youthful professional posture: Louis Kahn first gained a measure of renown in his fifties, and was prematurely struck down by a heart attack in his seventies, as he was approaching the pinnacle of his career; Frank Lloyd Wright was preparing a host of new projects when he was mistakenly dispatched heavenward at ninety-one; and Burrall Hoffman, the designer of the Villa Vizcaya, on Biscayne Bay, and other distinguished residences, didn't get around to designing a house for himself until he was in his middle eighties. As for Philip Johnson, who chose not to become an architect until he was in his late thirties, he is still in practice and is still wittily vexing rivals and critics in his ninety-first year.

We are taught to believe that there is an exception to every rule, and in my view the mighty exception to the rule regarding architects and old age is Henry Hobson Richardson. Born in 1838, he died at the preposterously early age of forty-seven. Moreover, by then he had dominated the profession of architecture in America for some fourteen years and had earned an international reputation as well, on the basis of a style that was unmistakably personal and, though everywhere ad-

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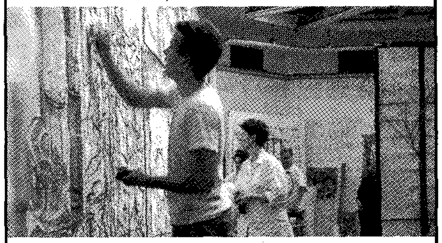

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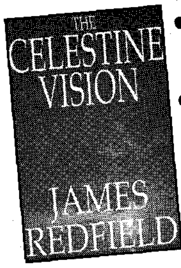

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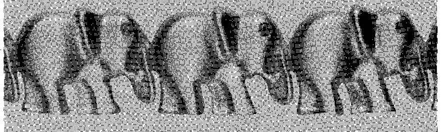

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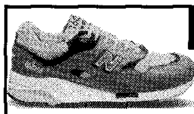

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mired and imitated, was his alone. In public architecture, he set a standard of grandly realized volumes of interior space which, spanned by a near delirium of vaults and crisscrossing arches, remind every young architectural student of Piranesi's fantasy prisons. In domestic architecture, he was the founder of what has come to be known as the Shingle style, and thousands of houses in that style were built by his followers, known and unknown, throughout the United States and abroad.

Richardson is unquestionably one of the dozen or so geniuses that our culture has produced since its beginnings, and in his field he is surpassed by none. Even Wright, who claimed to be not merely—merely!—the greatest of American architects but also the greatest architect who had ever lived, admitted to having an uneasy sense of Richardson's worth. And, just as his "*lieber Meister*," Louis Sullivan, contentedly did, Wright borrowed as much as he could carry away from the vast quarry of Richardson's talent—a quarry that also contained whatever singular quality it is that, though we struggle in vain to identify it, we recognize as being something above and beyond talent. It was a quality intrinsic to Richardson, shining out of him unself-consciously and without effort. Wright, for his part, put the quality on as he put on his inverness cape and porkpie hat, and strutted about in it, not altogether convincingly.

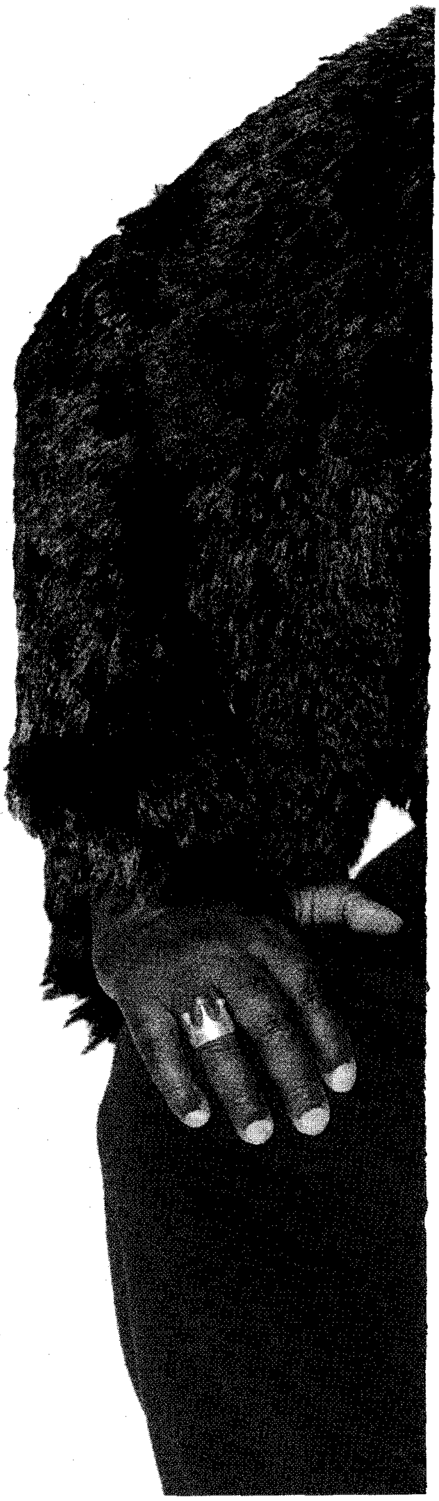
It is a notion of mine that a possible sign of genius is the ease with which a name enters the language and remains there. To this day, one speaks readily of Richardsonian, or Richardsonian Romanesque, and, well over a hundred years after Richardson's death, that is enough to evoke the image of a certain kind of building—one constructed of massive blocks of rough-cut granite and/or brownstone, softened by passages of light-colored sandstone or brick, with immense round-arched entranceways, tiled roofs, slitlike attic eyebrow windows, and chimneys on a deliberately exaggerated scale.

Henry James once said that, all other things being equal, a building that sits is more pleasing than a building that stands. According to the function of the building, Richardson was able to design pleasing buildings that stood and, just as readily, pleasing buildings that sat. Usually, it was his churches and courthouses that stood, his libraries and railroad stations and private residences that sat. By the end of the nineteenth century, nearly every American city of at least moderate size boasted a Richardsonian Romanesque building, and in most cases it was the chief object of pride to the community.

In 1885, architects throughout the country voted on what they considered to be the ten best buildings in America: five of them were by Richardson. He became the epitome of the Victorian period, and when the taste for Victorian art and architecture hit its nadir, some fifty or sixty years ago, scores of Richardsonian buildings were torn down, several of which were not just Richardsonian but by Richardson himself—among them the superb Marshall Field Wholesale Store in Chicago, which was a prototype of Adler & Sullivan's Auditorium Building there, and the two houses that he designed in Washington, D.C., for his friends John Hay and Henry Adams. (The Hay-Adams Hotel was built on the site.) In 1960, Richardson's very first building, the Church of the Unity (1866-69), in Springfield, Massachusetts, was demolished, and as late as 1966, when the Victorian Society in America was founded (its members being regarded as cranks, obsessed with the handiwork of an unfortunate past), one of the Society's goals, under the leadership of its president, the architectural historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock, was to help preserve Richardson's red brick railroad station in New London, Connecticut.

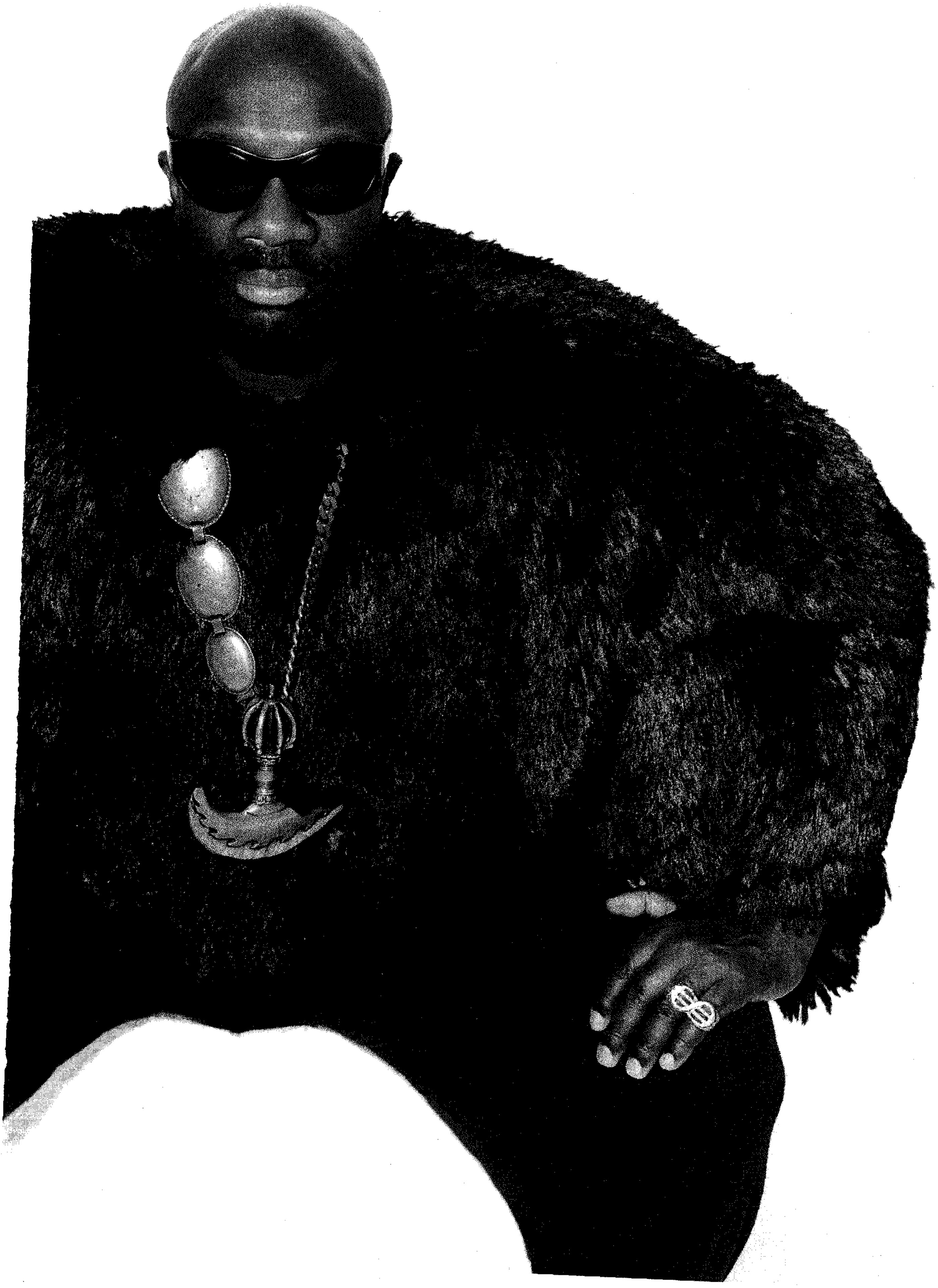
Today, the buildings by Richardson that remain are deservedly cherished

BEST OF HAYES



If you've forgotten the sound of Isaac Hayes, think back to 1971, when "The Theme from 'Shaft'" was a No. 1 hit. ("Who's the black private dick that's a sex machine to all the chicks?") The sharecropper's grandson perfected a look (dashiki, shaved head) suited to "Black Moses," his classic follow-up, then went on to become an R. & B. messiah. He barely worked in the eighties, but now he's the basso profundo of Chef on Comedy Central's cartoon "South Park," he has a radio show on New York's WRKS, and he's co-starring in the indie film "illtown," a funky shoot-'em-up directed by Nick Gomez. Isaac Hayes is back. Can you dig it?

Photograph by William Claxton



and are therefore likely to be left intact. His masterpiece is universally held to be Trinity Church, in Boston, which was built between 1872 and 1877. Among other important buildings from his hand that are still standing are the Brattle Square Church (1870-72), also in Boston, whose soaring exterior I prefer to that of Trinity; the Watts Sherman house, in Newport, Rhode Island (1874-76); the Ames Memorial Public Library, in North Easton, Massachusetts (1878-80); the Stoughton house, in Cambridge, Massachusetts (1882-83); the Glessner house, in Chicago (1885-87); and the Allegheny County Courthouse and Jail, in Pittsburgh (1883-88). It is hard to imagine a jail being called sublime, but here the word is appropriate. The ashlar granite walls of the building rise against the sky, block after Cyclopean block, and seem to embody not so much the grim necessity of punishment by incarceration as a principle of governance that is as old as the oldest city—the principle that society is entitled to a just defense against its enemies.

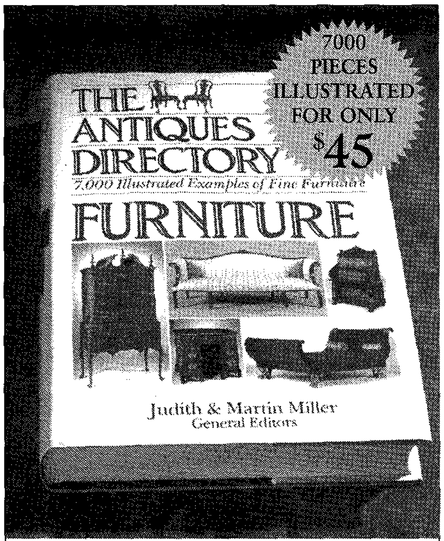
JAMES F. O'GORMAN, a professor of American art at Wellesley College, has written a concise biography of Richardson entitled, in a harmless attempt to cover as much ground as possible, "Living Architecture" (Simon & Schuster; $50). Of equal importance to O'Gorman's authoritative, if workmanlike, text are Cervin Robinson's marvellous photographs, which, in the course of displaying the range of Richardson's œuvre, convey as well his joyous inebriation with the nature of materials: the stoniness of stone, the woodiness of wood. In an attractive gesture by the publishers, the flap copy refers to O'Gorman and Robinson as "the authors," since the book is plainly an enterprise that has been shared equally. In a less attractive gesture, the publishers dare to boast that O'Gorman has written the first biography of Richardson. This is flap-copy flapdoodle, which O'Gorman himself contradicts early in his text, when he speaks of "the critic Mariana Van Rensselaer, Richardson's first biographer." To my mind, Mrs. Van Rensselaer is the best writer on architecture that we have ever had in this country, and her book on Richardson, published in 1888, two years after his death, remains delectable as a literary feat as well as an accurate source of facts and critical opinions. In calling her Richardson's first biographer, O'Gorman correctly leaves room for a second author—Henry-Russell Hitchcock, whose "The Architecture of H. H. Richardson and His Times," published in 1936, is fortunately still in print.

It is an aspect of Richardson's genius that he was that rare thing an individual with an inborn bent for happiness. He was lucky in this, as he was in everything except his health. Throughout much of his abbreviated life, he was mortally ill of the kidney ailment known as Bright's disease; he also suffered from a hernia that could be readily operated on nowadays but at that time required him to wear one or more miserably uncomfortable trusses. But even when he complained of his physical difficulties his tone was jolly and his groans were Falstaffian. Nor did he let these difficulties interfere with his eager embrace of social occasions. From his undergraduate days at Harvard—when, as a slender, handsome, wealthy, and well-born stranger from New Orleans, he was found to be clubbable, and achieved election to the Hasty Pudding Club, the Porcellian, and the Pierian Sodality—until the moment of his death in Brookline, everyone who met Richardson bore witness to his high spirits and sweetness of nature. Though he worked long and hard, he was always quick to organize a party, eating and drinking in a fashion that his doctors had long forbidden him to do. Alcohol ought to have been out of the question for him, but he was said to consume nearly a magnum of champagne with his dinner.

Men and women alike were irresistibly drawn to Richardson. His wife and their six children adored him, and so strong was his stamp on the family that eighteen direct or collateral descendants over four generations have become architects. In the eyes of friends, including the gloomy-minded Henry Adams, he could do no wrong, and, in fact, unlike most of the geniuses that we encounter in history, he did no wrong. He grew prodigiously fat—it was estimated that he eventually weighed more than three hundred and fifty pounds—and he ached all over, but he went on working night and day with the energy of a trained athlete. Meanwhile, his talent flowered and his designs grew ever more daring. When the Allegheny Courthouse and Jail were under construction, he is supposed to have exclaimed, "If they honor me for the pygmy things I have already done, what will they say when they see Pittsburgh finished?" In my judgment, Richardson was a man who had found that life was a fine thing and well worth embracing at any cost. For him, the cost must have been at times almost unendurably high, but no matter: for as long as he could, he would seize life and hug it to him.

ROBINSON'S photographs corroborate this view of Richardson's temperament. With the help of full color, the camera reveals the robust sensuality—even the voluptuousness—of interiors that, when they are photographed in black and white, often strike a note of gentlemanly decorum radically at odds with Richardson's intentions. If Trinity weren't a church, its gorgeous interior might be mistaken at first glance for the palace of some licentious Byzantine potentate. Scarcely less libidinal is the Senate Chamber in the State Capitol in Albany, where the hand of Richardson's assistant Stanford White is visible at every turn. The chamber expresses a virile lyricism that few New York State senators may be capable of appreciating in the midst of their parliamentary bickerings; be that as it may, it is one of the great rooms of the past century, in a class with the Veterans Room at the Seventh Regiment Armory (the handiwork of White and Louis Comfort Tiffany) and with J. Pierpont Morgan's private study in the Morgan Library (the handiwork of Charles McKim), both in New York City.

The emphatic masculinity of Richardson's architecture—all those big chunks of rough-cut stone, all those red-tile-capped spires and towers thrusting upward—is perhaps too much for some contemporary tastes. Richardson was the most popular architect in America during the post-Civil War period, because his architecture embodied certain age-old Vitruvian principles that the war had seemed to place in jeopardy. The architectural critic Montgomery Schuyler uttered a famous witticism to the effect that the Glessner house was defensible only in a military sense. The witticism is a truth-telling one. Primordially of the earth, fortresslike without and cavelike within, Richardson's buildings, private and public, seem to say, in the words of a great soldier, "Here I am, and here I stay." To our good fortune, many have stayed to this day, and we salute them. ♦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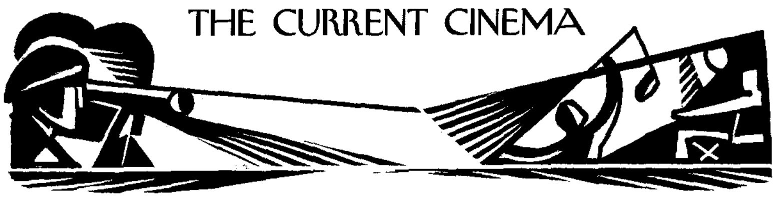
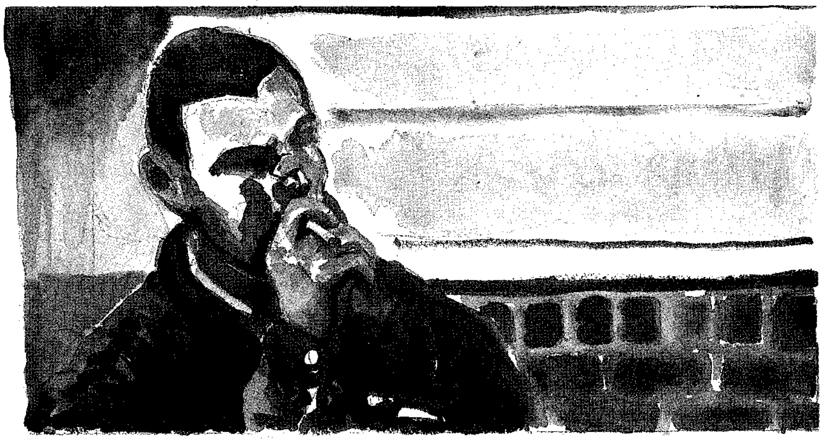


THE CURRENT CINEMA

IN YOUR FACE

Gary Oldman's vision of London speaks for itself.

BY ANTHONY LANE



Ray Winstone in "Nil by Mouth": what goes in is booze and what comes out is filth.

STEVEN LACK

THE actor Gary Oldman has written and directed his first film and called it "Nil by Mouth." Nominally, the title refers to a hospital patient who can only be fed intravenously. But the bulk of its meaning is ironic, since the movie revolves around a group of people for whom everything is by mouth. What goes in is booze: the opening shot finds Ray (Ray Winstone) at the bar of a pub, ordering beer and vodka—"oh, and a drop of Scotch." What comes out is a multitudinous sea of filth. The story is set in South London, and the patois of the place is for the most part doggedly obstetric and quite unprintable. Suffice it to say that "up the Gary" is not, contrary to what you might think, a coy attempt at self-promotion by the director.

It was a surprise to hear the English language, as spoken by the English, still punching its weight. Moviegoers take it for granted that the screen was long ago colonized by American slang; the Brits can be relied upon for rhetorical starch, but any notion that there was spit and vigor in the vulgar tongue of old England was dispelled by those crummy Michael Caine pictures in the sixties. Gary Oldman, however, makes the tongue wag like crazy; in the first scene, we listen to—or listen in on—a long Rabelaisian riff by Mark (Jamie Foreman), as he spills the particulars of an orgy. I sensed a small shock wave running around the movie theatre, but then people broke through the shock and began to laugh. Ten minutes in, and the movie had kidnapped us: Mark and his friend Ray were plainly rough around the edges, and the air was blue with smoke and smut, but they had earned our affection and from now on would hold us in their thrall.

More fool us. The rest of "Nil by Mouth" demonstrates the dangers of giving these lads an ounce of trust. Val (Kathy Burke) did the same thing when she married Ray, and now look at her. Considering all the jokes that are flying around, Val's drooping, fleshy face doesn't crack a smile as often as it should: "Change the record, for fuck's sake," she tells her husband. "I'm thirty today, and I feel so fuckin' old." Ray has overrun her life, like a one-man army, and she—together with her mother, grandmother, and six-year-old daughter, Michelle—still looks haunted and shattered by the invasion. Almost nobody in this film has a job—Val's mother works, but most of

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her earnings disappear into the heroin habit of her son Billy (Charlie Creed-Miles)—and the plot, too, proceeds with an ambling and unemployed air. When Billy winds up in prison, or Ray assaults his pregnant wife, the horror feels at once darkly predestined and completely random. All of which leaves one question: What is the point of paying eight dollars to see a film whose impact could be compared to getting whacked over the head with a shovel?

Well, some shovels are sharper than others. I went to "Nil by Mouth" in despondent reluctance, because everyone kept telling me how raw and uncompromising it was. But this movie is something else. Its onslaught on the nerves is such that only afterward can you consider the care and attention with which it is constructed. There are brief, dour landscapes, with morning mists the color of concrete and a sickly nighttime rain that turns yellow and green under city lights, but Oldman's real point of focus is the wreckage of the human face. Billy's features are blank and beaky, though rendered slightly more expressive when Ray tries to chew his nose off. Even scarier is a small boy in a hooded jacket whom we see in passing as he leaves a playground: he turns around, and his face has the dire, misshapen look of evil that can hardly wait to grow up. He is a riposte to the girl in red who runs through "Schindler's List"; where Spielberg sees children as a flash of hope, Oldman fears for the future they will bring.

Then, there is Ray. It's some time since I saw an actor fill a film in this way; gazing at Winstone, you can't help thinking back to De Niro in his great Scorsese years. You warm to Ray, as you did to Jake La Motta, because his verbal delivery speaks of a man whose appetite for life has become a craving; as his hunger deepens, though, and he starts to bite into lives other than his own, you pull away. With his cropped and sweaty hair and the trademark sniff of the cokehead, Ray proves that a fine figure of a man can go to seed in a season; when he sits in a pub wearing a V-neck sweater without a shirt, you can see the sheer squat packing of flesh in his neck and shoulders, the ropy cords of muscle that have started to slacken in the blur of drink. He throws his wife to the floor, kicks her head, and stands there tugging at the waistband of his boxer shorts like a kid needing to pee; once the demons have rushed out of him, Ray is hollowed out and unmanned. Think of a bear chained to nothing but itself.

The one weak moment comes when Ray sits and talks about his father. "I don't remember one kiss, you know, one cuddle, nothing," he says. As psychological explanation, this rings perfectly true; "Nil by Mouth" unfolds in a world where, in Philip Larkin's words, man hands on misery to man. The trouble is that by this stage we don't want explanation; Oldman has shown himself so adept at dramatizing the fallout from an exploding individual that Ray's self-analysis feels beside the point—everything he laments was there in the eyes of that boy in the playground, and we glimpse it again in the final scene. This is staged as a happy ending, with all sins forgiven and the family back together, but I found it terrifying; when Ray rubs noses with his daughter Michelle, all I could think of was how long it would take for the milk of human kindness to go sour.

"Nil by Mouth" forced me to clarify everything that I dislike about Oldman's fellow-directors in Britain. His characters may rant their lungs out, but he himself, unlike Ken Loach, has no desire to hector us, and his film is too shapely and unskewed to strike political attitudes. And where Mike Leigh seems to be gripping each social class in a pair of tweezers and slyly holding his nose, Oldman faces his characters square on; he has a story to tell, and he doesn't flinch from no-go areas such as the notorious kinship of violence and sentimentality in the British working class—just look at the drunken Ray, mouthing "I love you" to a bare wall. It is a world kept alive and intact by women; no wonder that the amazing Kathy Burke, who won the award for Best Actress at Cannes, should loom larger as the film goes on. Val is a still point of decency and a rebuff to the self-pity of angry men.

Gary Oldman chose not to appear in his own film. Whether that is a declaration of intent I don't know, but his recent roles, like the hammy villain in "The Fifth Element," suggested a weary contempt for the grand studio style. "Nil by Mouth" is the way out for Oldman, and a way forward. Ray may be stuck in the groove, but Gary has changed the record. ◆

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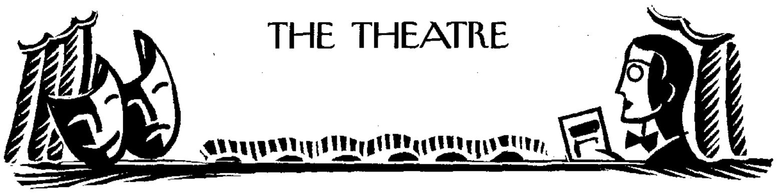
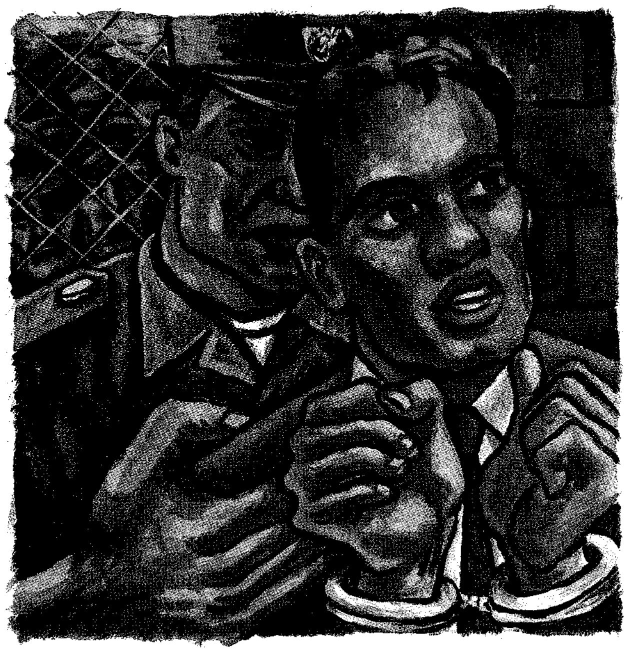


RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE

Paul Simon makes his Broadway début with "The Capeman."

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

YOU'D be hard pressed to come up with a team that equals the Artistic All-Stars involved in "The Capeman," the new musical based on a notorious crime that took place in New York City in the summer of 1959. Paul Simon, who conceived the show, wrote the music; Derek Walcott collaborated with Simon on the book and the lyrics; Mark Morris choreographed and directed; and Ruben Blades leads the cast, which includes two other major Latino singing stars, Marc Anthony and Ednita Nazario. One would call it a dazzling array of talent if one weren't afraid of sounding vulgar in the face of such street cred and artistic integ. Given this story and the sensibilities at work, I expected to be made to think by "The Capeman"; what I didn't expect was that the show would make me do its thinking for it. Here, where there's smoke, there's no corresponding fire of insight, ideas, interpretation—there are only damp, sputtery logs of received non-wisdom.


Marc Anthony as a young killer heading for hard time.

ELIZABETH UYEHARA

What happened on that summer night was simple: a group of teen-agers, members of a Puerto Rican gang called the Vampires, left their turf in upper Manhattan and descended on a playground on West Forty-fifth Street, seeking revenge for the beating of a gang member. One of the Vampires, Salvador Agrón, stabbed and killed two boys—two white boys, who, it turned out, had had absolutely nothing to do with the beating. A few days later, Agrón and an accomplice, Tony Hernandez, were arrested; the night of the crime, Agrón had been wearing a cape, and Hernandez had been carrying an umbrella, and they became known in the tabloids as the Cape Man and the Umbrella Man. Agrón was sentenced to die in the electric chair. (He didn't; his sentence was commuted to life in prison, and he was paroled in 1979. He died in 1986, at the age of forty-two. The Umbrella Man's conviction was later overturned; he is still alive.) The case was a media event, and it reinforced deep-seated convictions and prejudices about crime, punishment, justice, law and order, urban decay, and race.

Simon's music for "The Capeman," it must be said, is mostly very lovely—there are some lilting, propulsive melodies reminiscent of "Graceland," and he weaves together Latin music, doo-wop, country, and rhythm and blues seamlessly. In fact, the music makes the show's points better than the words do.

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In the scenes before the killing takes place, the songs become more and more joyous, more exciting and hormonally charged. The Vampires go on a giddy shoplifting spree and then dance with their girlfriends in their new duds. The show reaches its highest emotional pitch as the boys and girls preen and strut and sing to each other. During the stabbing, the music we hear is sweet, energetic, and irresistible, and at this moment the show comes close to making a case that there's a kind of innocence in getting carried away in the heat of the moment, or at least that the heat of the moment can melt the line between innocence and guilt.

The over-all tenor of the show, though, fulfilled the fears that began germinating when I heard the CD of songs from "The Capeman" that Simon released a few months ago. (He doesn't perform in the show, but he sings most of the songs on the CD.) The first song, "Adiós Hermanos," is an elegiac ballad, sung by Sal as he's being taken away in chains to begin serving his prison term. He says:

> Well, I entered the courtroom, state of
>   New York
> County of New York, just some spic
> They scrubbed off the sidewalk
> Guilty by my dress
> Guilty in the press
> Let the Capeman burn for the murder . . .
> The electric chair
> For the greasy pair
> Said the judge to the court reporter

Stop the music! Agrón's guilt wasn't caused by prejudice—it was caused by Agrón. Later in the song, a chorus of women sing, "A Spanish boy could be killed every night of the week," and Sal takes it from there:

> But just let some white boy die
> And the world goes crazy for blood—
>   Latin blood.

Simon, I thought, was setting a trap for listeners, trying to bring the concealed racist in us out of hiding. That would have been an interesting starting point; but, maddeningly, it's also more or less where things end up. In the show, Ruben Blades, who plays Salvador as a grown man, sings this song as he watches his younger self, played by Marc Anthony, going off to the Big House. It's one thing for a disturbed teen-ager to sing these words, but a grownup? It becomes clear right away that we're not going on a journey here—we're going on a wallow. And Blades, in this role, isn't someone you want to be in a mudbath with. He projects negative charisma: there's no lustre in his eyes or in his voice, and, as if to prove how beaten down he was by "the state," he's careful never to indicate the least hint of spring in his step. He also, inexplicably and annoyingly, carries a sheaf of paper tied with string during most of the show. Finally, we find out why: Agrón, who was virtually unschooled, started writing in prison. Ah, yes, the old poetry defense; there should be a Monopoly card that says "Write a book—get out of jail free."

Simon and Walcott's book coddles the characters and panders to the audience. Although Simon has earned his multicultural merit badge several times over by now, there's something phony about the constant references to Puerto Rican folklore, to visions, to dreams, to angels, to the fact that Salvador means "savior" in Spanish. Instead of emotion and religion, we get emotionalism and religiosity, and theatrically that doesn't fly. Once Agrón goes to prison, at the end of the first act, the show seems to come to a halt, partly because Blades takes over for Anthony, and partly because none of the ideas about fate and individual responsibility and redemption are given dramatic form.

There is some meat in this weak broth, but, surprisingly, Mark Morris's usual spirit and wit never surface. (Morris bowed out as director a few weeks ago, and Jerry Zaks took over.) Bob Crowley, the set designer, has created at least one truly brilliant and breathtaking image in this show (alas, mentioning it means that I must also mention that his set has the great misfortune of being at the Marquis, a truly hideous airport lounge of a theatre): a patch of sky and some lit-up buildings, seen from a thrilling, vertiginous angle. It's a new addition to the city's iconography—the New York equivalent of the stairway of light in "An American in Paris." Wendall K. Harrington has done excellent work with projections, creating in black-and-white images a particularly urban sense of menace, grit, and crushing tedium. These touches of imagination don't quite free the show of its prison of stale ideas; whatever judgment the audience sends down, Paul Simon has already seen to it that "The Capeman" will hang by its own hand. ♦

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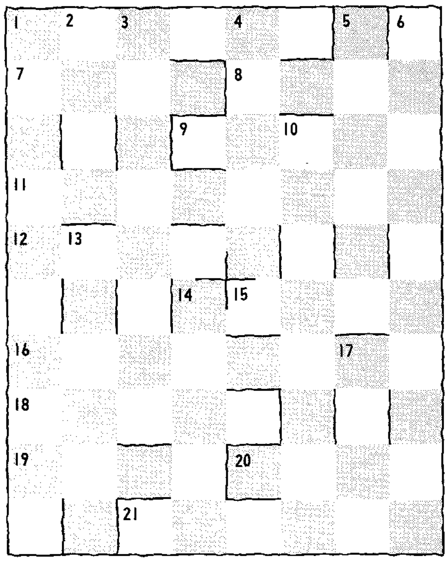

ACROSS

1 Where to get marble game (6)
7 In the Sound, brings in vessels (4)
8 Fascinated by Ford car with front trimmed (4)
9 Classical poet is a big hit (5)
11 Lacking optimism, famous Argentinian general retreats (8)
12 Seabird's change of course, you might say (4)
15 Awful native offers bone (4)
16 Relatives captivated by ladies' shoes and fall fare (8)
18 Slightly tilts menus (5)
19 Held back by zookeeper's fencing material? (4)
20 Bill, possibly, takes time for a party (4)
21 Well-loved Communist goes after trouble (6)

DOWN

1 Upend quilt Dotty made five times (10)
2 With shaved head, get rid of desire (4)
3 A complainer slams wordplay (8)
4 One among degenerates causing disturbances (5)
5 Spielberg's playing fast and loose with events (6)
6 Woody's going around California, as predicted (10)
10 Fashion-industry worker/gold-digger takes ill (8)
13 Prepares jokes, succeeding easily at first (6)
14 Chose vandalized depot (5)
17 Mention collar is turned up (4)

• •

The solution to puzzle No. 31 appears at the right. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.

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ANSWERS TO 8 x 10 CRYPTIC NO. 31

ACROSS

1 LAC(ROSS)E (ref. Harold Ross)
8 PIT + Y
9 MALT + A
10 B(REACH)ED
12 G + ALL
14 A + SHE
15 SPAN + IE + L + S
17 UNSET (anag.)
18 CREW (2 defs.)
19 KEYBOARD (anag.)

DOWN

1 LAMB + D.A.
2 A + JAR
3 ROT(A)TE (*T tore* anag.)
4 S + INHALES + E
5 S(TEE)LY
6 EYED (*I'd* hom.)
7 AL(EX HALE)Y (*lay* anag.)
11 ASP+IRE
12 G(RING)O
13 LASTED (anag.)
15 SOCK (2 defs.; Oxford = shoe)
16 cLEAR

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

CHEAP TALK

BY FRANK GANNON AND ROGER ANGELL

I KNOW you want to hear this, so I'll tell you. But if you tell a single soul I will just kill you. You better not. O.K., here goes: I, too, did it with Bill Clinton.

I know I'm not alone, but I am a member of a pretty special club. If we got organized, we would have to hold meetings in a good-sized hall. No bitty Elks' Club, no V.F.W. But then we definitely wouldn't need the Pontiac Silverdome.

He gave me a copy of "The Bridges of Madison County." I know it's not "Leaves of Grass" or Poe's "Tales of Mystery and Imagination," but it's better than "I, the Jury." I know somebody who got that one. There's a rumor going around that somebody got "The Cat in the Hat," but that's just a rumor. Somebody did get "Robert's Rules of Order," but I think that was just an impulse gift—something that was, like, at hand. Supposedly someone was given Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," but I don't think so. Nobody is getting any multiple-volume sets anymore. By the time I met him, he was way past the multiple-volume stage.

We all know that there is some correlation between the book you get and the experience, but exactly what the connection is—well, that's debatable, open to interpretation. Once in a while, I've heard, he can get really cryptic. Like what would you think if he gave you a copy of "Tristram Shandy"? I had to read that in college and I was like, "Hello?" You could sit around all day trying to figure that out. Other times he can be pretty straightforward. If you get Jean-Paul Sartre's "Nausea," that's not a big conundrum. But if you get, say, "Build Your Own Back-Yard Deck," that can start you thinking. I say just let it alone. You can't explain everything. He's a Rhodes Scholar. He's deep. Leave it at that.

One interesting area is the names that we call him, how to refer to him. The Big He is an original one, but no fair claiming the Creep. That has been worn out. A lot of them are so used up. Don't even think about Terminator, the Brain, Mister Big, or the Gold Standard. They are so *old*. I heard some cute ones. The Jackal is kind of sweet. Super Fly is retro. Spice Boy, though, is such a ripoff.

I saw the previews for "Primary Colors." I don't think John Travolta looks the least bit like him, and I told him so. The President is much more distinguished-looking. I told him that if anyone is going to play him in a movie it ought to be Leonardo DiCaprio. He laughed. He loved that. So I told him again.

LEAVES OF GRASS
WALT WHITMAN

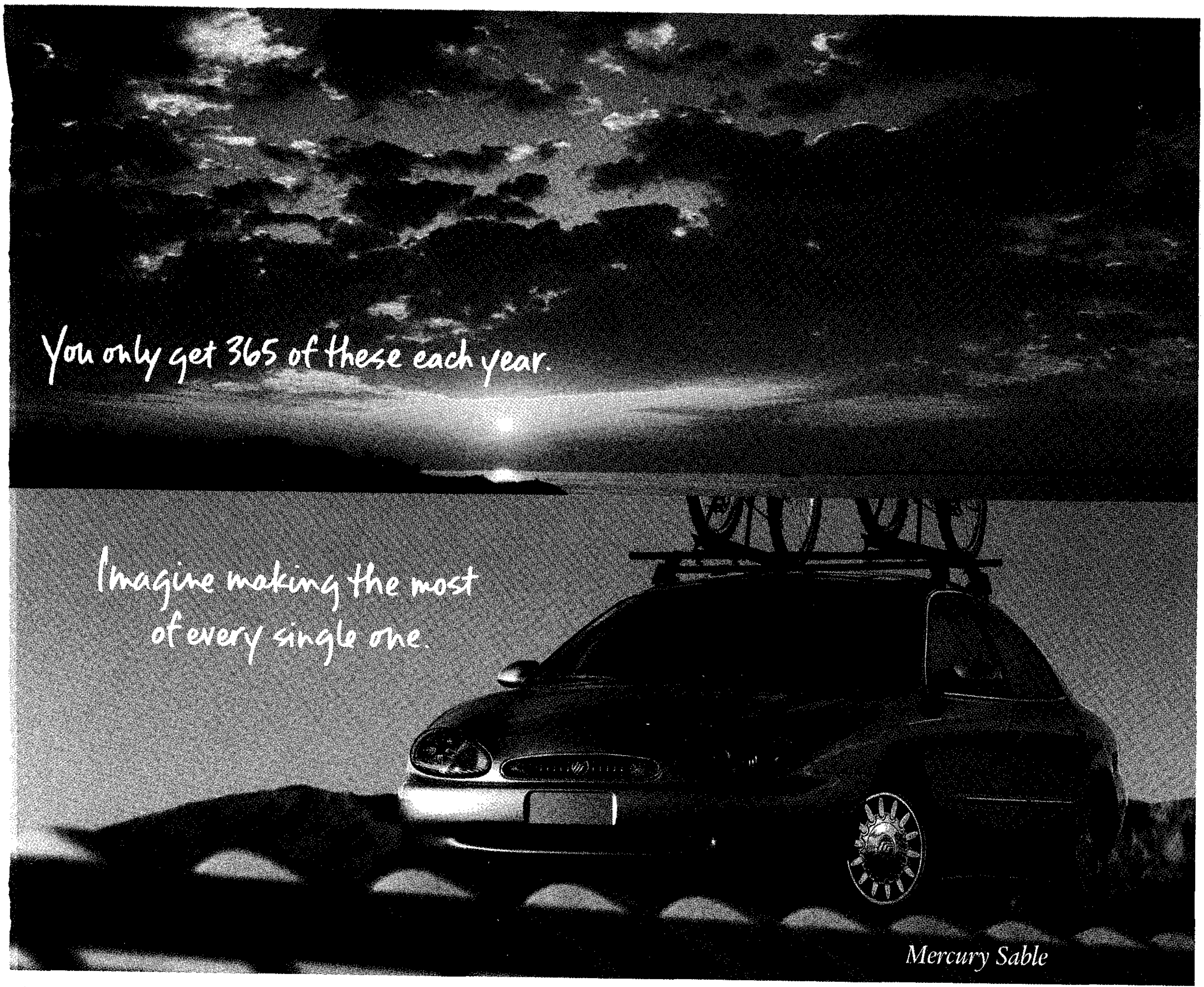
How did we meet? I'm out early, walking my vizsla, Antoine, when here comes the leader of the Western world, in sweats, who pulls up and says "Hey, I've got a pooch now, so tell me, how long is housebreaking, how long is obedience training, what kind of kibble, how you *doing*?" Already, he knows a lot about dogs. Affenpinschers, Dandie Dinmonts, Clumber spaniels, pulik, Yorkies, bichons frises, pugs: he knows every breed—the history, the smarts, the problems, which kind bites, sheds, wets. Then he bends down and scratches Antoine's ears. We took it from there.

What did we talk about when we were alone together? Everybody asks that. Didn't you ever hear the word "private"? I mean, what didn't we talk about? He just knows so much about everything. Like all that country stuff. About farms and pigs and alfalfa and sorghum and stuff. And about okra. Also entitlements. NAFTA. Sri Lanka. Social promotion. The Nikkei. Human genomes. The Dream Factory. Socks. Wislawa Szymborska. Medicare. Isaiah Berlin, Compaq, financial globalization. "L'Incoronazione di Poppea," Medicaid, Java scripts. On and on like that. My Bill has a line you wouldn't *believe*.

To bring him back, I always whisper "okra" again, and it never fails. I know it sounds kind of gross, but lovers have these little secrets. If that doesn't work, I ask about tractors. He knows everything about tractors. And music. He listens to all kinds of music. He even knows Hanson's first names. I asked him once if he'd ever met Puff Daddy and he said no. Nobody can meet Puff Daddy, he's so remote. But he knows Dennis Rodman.

On the phone, he likes to ask about what you're wearing, even the brand names. He just knows everything. If I say "CK," he whispers "Thierry Mugler." If I come back with "Tommy Hilfiger," he murmurs "Comme des Garçons." But this doesn't last for long. Away he goes again, off on his own—the minimum wage, "Kundun," the Euro. Global warming. Okra. We're both smiling, and this warm, happy feeling is creeping around us again and we're alone together, riding his rap. Does talking count as oral sex? Need you ask? ♦

MICHAEL CRAWFORD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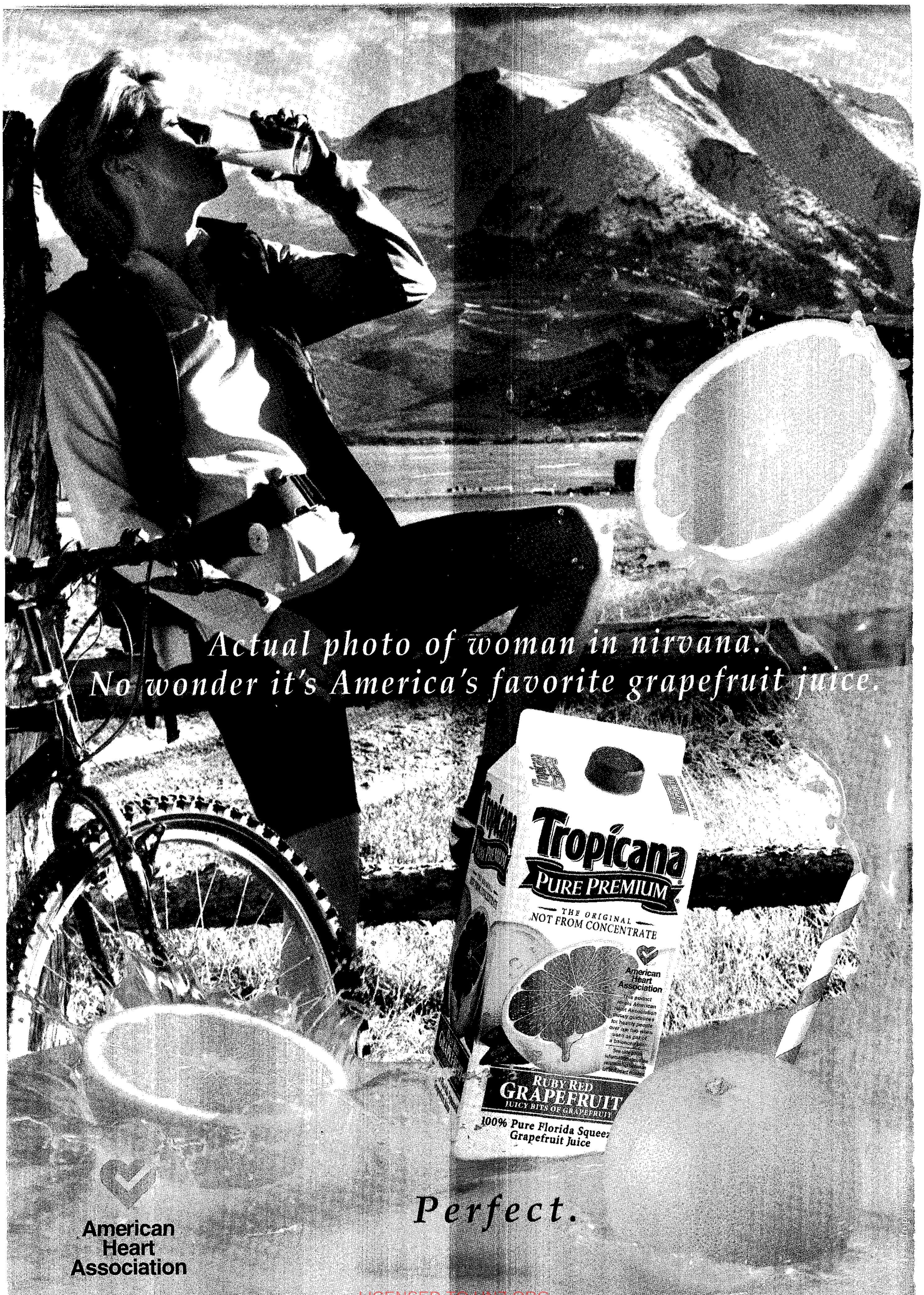
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